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Fashioning Sensibility: Emotions in Gianna Manzini's Fashion Journalism

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Abstract

The study is the first interdisciplinary investigation into fashion journalism under the fascist regime and in the post-war period (1922-1960), a crucial time for Italy and the worldwide consolidation of its fashion industry. Firmly grounded in the semiological method applied by Roland Barthes to fashion language, as well as in fashion and journalism studies, it breaks new ground by using the study of emotions as a tool to analyse fashion writing and give new insights into models of femininity and experiences of fashion, also providing entirely new understanding of Gianna Manzini, a key fashion journalist and novelist of twentieth century Italy.

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Definitions/Abbreviations

F.M. = Fondazione Alberto e Arnoldo Mondadori in Milan

F/S = Barthes, *The Fashion System*

Introduction

Conceived as a semiological investigation into Manzini's fashion journalism, this research aims to uncover the way written fashion, understood as system of signs that conveys meanings, can carry emotions both at the level of the signifier (form) and the signified (content), revealing what Italian fashion journalism shows us about emotions and ideas of womanhood in the years crucial for the assessment of the Italian fashion industry and style. Manzini's writings have been chosen for analysis because she carried out both the activity of novelist and that of fashion contributor for contemporary newspapers and magazines. Scholarship has always tended to examine her novels as separate from the investigation of fashion articles, failing to identify possible synergies between these two productions. Lia Fava Guzzetta and Enzo Panareo, for example, mention Manzini's fashion writings when discussing her literary profile but they keep general about her activity as fashion journalist.¹ This has resulted in a serious imbalance between the great number of critical studies of her literary activity and the scarce attention paid to her fashion journalism. At present, the overall state of play regarding Manzini's fashion production is limited to two anthologies that both gather a selection of articles. *La moda di Vanessa*, published in 2003, as the name suggests, is the first collection of articles that Manzini signed with one of her two pseudonyms *Vanessa* - while the second name she used is *Pamela*. These articles were published between 1950 and 1960 in the journal *La Fiera Letteraria*. Although Nicoletta Campanella, the editor of the collection, concludes the anthology with a detailed biographical and literary profile of the author in which she also makes important comments on *Vanessa's* fashion journalism, the work lacks a broad interdisciplinary contextualisation of Manzini's articles, in terms of historical context and stylistic analysis.

The second book is entitled *Scacciata dal paradiso* and it was edited and published in 2012 by Sarah Sivieri.² Unlike *La moda di Vanessa*, the set of publications gathered in *Scacciata dal paradiso* establishes Manzini as a versatile journalist. The book shows how, during her journalistic career, Manzini tackled a heterogeneous selection of themes: manners and social customs, contemporary issues, and fashion. This casts a new perspective upon the total person of Manzini. In presenting socially committed articles, *Scacciata dal paradiso* dismantles the idea of Manzini as writer completely detached from the social issues of her age. This conceit arose because her novels do not show any explicit reference to current historical events like the Second World War. As Sivieri suggests, this has fostered, among

¹ Panareo, Enzo, *Gianna Manzini*, (Milano: Mursia, 1977) and Fava Guzzetta, Lia, *Gianna Manzini* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1974).

² Manzini, Gianna, *Scacciata dal paradiso*, ed. by S. Sivieri, and B. Garavelli, (Matelica: Hacca, 2012).

literary critics, the image of Manzini as a writer who is refined and isolated from the contemporary issues, adding that her novels show more concern with the emotive consequences produced by actions rather than being interested in historical events.³ Sivieri's work, on the other hand, presents the writer as a journalist involved in the debate regarding gender equality in Italy, as well as interested in the ongoing discussion on the modernisation that occurred during the post-war period. Sivieri also points to the continuities between Manzini journalistic production and her narrative, mentioning the role played by literary quotations in her fashion articles. These, along with the archival research that Manzini carried out for some of her fashion articles, show how the influence between fashion, art and literature was an important feature of her fashion production. This important point will be discussed in Chapter Two below. However, *Scacciata dal paradiso*, conceived as an anthology of Manzini's selected journalistic writings, does not deepen, through a broad analysis, the conveyance of emotions in the relationship between fashion and womanhood that arises in Manzini's fashion production. This requires a broad investigation in the light of the parallel between her novels and her production as a journalist. In addition, following the route of Sivieri in considering Manzini's as not detached from historical events, I will analyse the fashion production along with the historical context, arguing how history and contemporary issues permeated her discourse on fashion.

In addition, the research that I conducted in the three archives of Manzini - held in the Fondazione Mondadori in Milan, the Archivio del '900 and Biblioteca Nazionale in Rome - has revealed a great number of fashion articles that have neither been exposed to academic attention nor published in critical editions. Having in mind the articles that have already been published by Campanella and Sivieri, this research focuses on a selected portion of material not republished in a critical edition. The articles considered are those signed with the pseudonym *Pamela* and published in the column 'La Vetrina delle Donne' in the weekly magazine *Oggi*. The articles' date of publication covers the period from 1938 to 1942 but I will also consider unpublished material of the same period signed by *Vanessa*, because, along with the writings of *Pamela*, they were written in the same interval of time, creating a uniform corpus of analysis with no substantial differences between the two pseudonyms.

This research follows an interdisciplinary approach that combines semiological studies on the written language of fashion with the study of how emotions can be conveyed in writings, with a close analysis of Manzini's literary profile and its influences on her fashion production. The methodology employed uses my knowledge of fashion history and of linguistic analysis.

³ Manzini and Sivieri, p. 209.

At this stage it is important to underline what is meant by emotions and why they will be important in our analysis of fashion journalism. Emotions, in both Manzini's novels and fashion articles, are understood as the written expression of mood, attitudes, and feelings: they will be investigated taking into consideration how the author/journalist conceived her ideal readers during her creative process. This allows us to understand to what extent Manzini crafted a style of writing that is emotional in its form and what types of emotions she pinpoints to appeal to the readers of her fashion texts. In this perspective, the purpose of the research is twofold. On the one hand, the analysis of the signifier aims to reveal the devices that the author employs to create an emotional bond with her readers. It will be shown how a specific set of rhetorical figures enhances the emotional perception that *Pamela* - or *Vanessa* - purportedly felt regarding a specific fashion trend or object and that she wants to transmit to her readers. The way Manzini does so can suggest a certain kind of 'ideal' author that she presented to readers, showing how this perception is reflected in the style of her fashion articles.

On the other hand, the analysis of the signified allows us to understand what kind of emotions the author was to attribute to the types of female characters in the articles in order to appeal to her readers and allow them to identify with the situations illustrated. It throws light on the kind of emotional settings and themes the author employed to persuade her readers to buy a specific fashion item or collection and shows us what this emotional content can tell us about the nature, ideals, and aspirations of female readership at the time.

The need to explore fashion writings in journalism rises from the limited attention that has been paid to Italian fashion as language and system of meaning. Italian fashion, understood as the material and cultural output of refined knowledge and distinctive aesthetic sense rooted in the Renaissance, has been studied a lot. The studies of Carlo Marco Belfanti and Eugenia Paulicelli draw attention to the Renaissance period as crucial for the emergence and the definition of Italian cultural identity and taste that, during the 1950s, was conceptualised as 'Made in Italy'.⁴ Both nationally and abroad, Italian textiles and fashion creations have been studied in an interdisciplinary way, producing interesting studies in terms of the national history of fashion or the field of aesthetics, by investigating the roots and the features of Italian taste and style.⁵ However, scholarship has always focused on fashion as a material and visual phenomenon, paying less attention to what Barthes has called 'written

⁴ Belfanti, Carlo M., 'Renaissance and 'Made in Italy': Marketing Italian Fashion Through History' (1949–1952), in *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 20 (2015), 53–66; Paulicelli, Eugenia, 'Fashion: The Cultural Economy of Made in Italy', in *Fashion Practice*, 6 (2014), 155–174.

⁵ Steele, Valerie, 'Italian Fashion and America' in *Italian Metamorphosis*, ed. by G. Celant (New York: Guggenheim, 1994); Gnoli, Sofia, *Origins of Italian Fashion: 1900–45* (London: V&A, 2014).

fashion'.⁶ As a matter of fact, the studies of fashion language have always followed two basic orientations. Italian scholarship has extensively written on the linguistic mechanisms of the language employed to deal with fashion, focusing on the nature of fashion vocabulary that has been investigated from both a diachronic and synchronic perspective. The most fruitful line of research in this respect is the Italian sociolinguistic approach that through the studies of Giuseppe Sergio, Maria Catricalà, and Alberto Sobrero,⁷ has investigated the complex stratification of the language employed in fashion, analysing it also as 'sectorial' and 'special' language.

Otherwise, interesting studies have been conducted on the history of Italian fashion journalism. Silvia Franchini and Simonetta Soldani trace the whole development of Italian fashion publishing since the rise of eighteenth-century periodicals.⁸ Elisabetta Mondello gives an account of the development of the fashion press during fascism, while Eugenia Paulicelli shows a broader analysis of the fashion system during the years of Mussolini's dictatorship.⁹

However, a proper semiological study of fashion language understood as a system of meaning, able to tell us about the kind of imaginary, dreams and emotions that articles attach to fashion at the time of Manzini is currently lacking.

Semiological investigation of the written language of fashion can be fruitful especially in authors, like Manzini, who were both journalists and novelists and where the coexistence of the literary and journalistic productions can tell us something new about the unexplored articles of fashion

This research project lies at the intersection of a set of disciplines, foregrounding important issues regarding the historical period, the literary activity of Manzini and Italian fashion understood as a cultural product.

The overall work will be organised as follows. The first chapter looks at the first sixty years of twentieth century Italy. The aim is to highlight the milestones of the rise of the Italian fashion industry and culture, emphasising the most important steps made by the Italian government towards the promotion of national fashion. Special attention will be granted to

⁶ Barthes, Roland, *The Fashion System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

⁷ Catricalà, Maria, 'Il linguaggio della moda' in *Lingua e identità. Una storia sociale dell'italiano*, ed. by Pietro Trifone (Roma: Carrocci, 2006) pp. 65-86; Sergio, Giuseppe, *Parole di moda – Il "Corriere delle Dame" e il lessico della moda nell'Ottocento*, (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2010); Sobrero, Alberto, A., 'Lingue speciali', in *Introduzione all'italiano contemporaneo. La variazione e gli usi*, ed. by A. Sobrero, (Bari: Laterza, 1993) pp. 237-277.

⁸ Franchini S., Soldani S. ed., *Donne e giornalismo. Percorsi e presenze di una storia di genere*, (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2004).

⁹ Mondello, Elisabetta, *La nuova italiana: la donna nella stampa e nella cultura del ventennio*, (Roma: Riuniti, 1987); Paulicelli, Eugenia, *Fashion Under Fascism: Beyond the Black Shirt*, (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

fascism and the post-war period, as both are crucial moments during which the dictatorship, and later the Italian state, took a specific position toward the cultural and economic development of fashion. This section will also consider the socio-cultural implications of these actions. The second chapter provides an insight into the literary profile of Manzini, highlighting the features that make her narrative emotional. This chapter, apart from outlining Manzini's biographical and literary profile, provides a more cogent explanation of why she has been chosen as a case study for this research. Chapter Three presents the theoretical foundations of this study. A great emphasis will be given to Roland Barthes' theory, especially to his semiology of written fashion that culminated in the outline of the 'three systems of fashion'. Important concepts like the *writing*, the *poetics* and the *rhetoric of fashion* are going to be explored and applied to Manzini's fashion writings to discover how emotions work in her communication of fashion. The framework will be further developed through Trip Glazer's insights into the way that emotions can be conveyed in written expressions and William Reddy's concept of 'emotives'. This chapter also presents theories elaborated in the field of literary criticism by Wayne C. Booth and Wolfgang Iser in terms of the relationship between the implied author and the implied reader in a text. These theoretical coordinates will be adopted in Chapter Four: here the semiological method will be applied to a selected corpus of Manzini's articles to discover how emotions are delivered, both at the level of the signifier and the signified, in Italian twentieth century fashion journalism. The last chapter lays out the conclusions of the analysis, setting up the points that will be further developed and investigated in my Ph.D.

Chapter I

Fashion industry and culture from Fascism to Republican Italy

The understanding of any literary or journalistic output needs a proper cultural and historical framework. This chapter aims to set the work of Manzini in the Italian context of the twentieth century, emphasising how her career crosses two important moments in the development of the national fashion industry: fascism and the post-war period. The historical synopsis outlined here lingers on fascism, especially because of its relationship with women and models of womanhood in fashion magazines. This provides the socio-cultural and historical coordinates for the analysis of Manzini's articles written between 1938-1942 – namely the original corpus of publications signed by *Pamela* in the magazine *Oggi*. Manzini's activity will be contextualised in the light of ambivalent models of femininity proposed by fashion journalism during the fascist autarchic policy on fashion.

As my research considers the overall development of Manzini's novels and her journalistic production, I decided to extend the historical framework beyond the aftermath of the Second World War, including the period between the 1950s and 1960s. This interval of time shows Manzini's commitment to the contemporary debate around women, which I deem useful for our analysis. Besides, far from conceiving of the war as a watershed between fascism and the post-war period, this 'extended' historical scenario shows the development of the Italian fashion industry as an ongoing process, especially in the fabrication of 'Made in Italy' of which Manzini, through her uninterrupted literary and journalistic activity, was an exceptional witness.

1.1 Women and fashion during fascism and in the Aftermath of World War Two

Women and fashion were promptly assimilated into fascist ideology, becoming the instrument in the hand of Mussolini to serve his utopia of fascistising Italian society. In outlining the features that marked the relationship between fascism and the female universe, as well as the synergies between fascism and fashion, I aim to comprehend how the fashion press fitted in this context, especially in the light of the autarchic policy which affected both women's lives and the Italian fashion industry.

Victoria De Grazia emphasizes the key role played by the ‘nationalization’ of women by fascist policy.¹⁰ She recognizes that the ‘nationalization of masses’ – namely the state intervention in shaping ‘civic obligations, collective virtues and personal values required for citizenship in nation-states embattled in an increasingly competitive world system’ - was already a feature of liberal states in the nineteenth century.¹¹ However, she stresses how fascism politicised in authoritarian way the different nature of men and women, to the detriment of the latter. Women’s sexuality and social rights were used to sustain the initiatives undertaken by the regime, creating a vicious circle where the acknowledgement of women’s rights was the other side of the coin of the denial of their emancipation.¹² As a consequence, an important feature of fascism was tighter control of the lives of individuals, achieved by blurring the borders between the public and private spheres. This was also implemented via the organisation of mass leisure activities that structured and gave the regime more control over the lives of citizens and it supported the regime’s aim to make the society uniform by showing itself as a ‘supraclass identity’.¹³ However, these activities, even though highly controlled by the regime, gave some strata of the population a certain degree of freedom that had not been experienced before. For example, women who took part in political activities were brought out of the home. This gave them the illusion of being part of the state machine even though fascism used them to reach its ends. Indeed, at the same time, fascism promoted a very restricted idea of women as mothers in the aim of producing more citizens, that is more soldiers in order to create colonies.¹⁴ It followed that women, came to have the essential role in giving as many children as possible to the homeland. From this perspective, the nationalisation of women was conceived to create a consensus, but it also served the purpose to support the demographic campaign.

However, the exploitation of women was so crucial that fascism structured further the ideal type of the fascist woman. Far from being a simple ‘factory’ of babies, she must also be an exemplar and sober wife, dedicated completely to her family as well as to the nation. For this reason, by equating the health of individuals with that of the nation, Mussolini gave importance to the health of female bodies.¹⁵ He imposed control over them, shaping both morally and physically the ‘new Italian woman’. Socially speaking, fascism pushed women

¹⁰ De Grazia, Victoria, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 7.

¹¹ De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 6.

¹² De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 7.

¹³ De Grazia, Victoria, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 151.

¹⁴ Leone, Mirella, *Il fascismo e l'universo femminile: consenso e dissenso delle donne italiane*, (Verona: QuiEdit, 2017), pp. 36-8.

¹⁵ De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 211.

to pursue family life, rather than entering into the labour market.¹⁶ The woman who wished to dedicate herself to family and to pursuing a career was accused of not fulfilling, in the best way, her duties toward the family, and, consequently, toward the nation. Also, intellectual work was perceived as something that could divert women from maternity, and fascism curbed any cultural activity undertaken by women considering it as qualitatively poor if compared to that of men. On the other hand, the demand to be prolific mothers entailed also the delineation of the physical female prototype: being charged with giving birth, the fascist woman had to be healthy, robust and full-figured. This image was very close to that of the so-called ‘*massaie rurali*’ that not only exemplified visually the typical fascist woman, but they also embodied the values of tradition and provincialism upon which fascist propaganda relied.

This positive model of ‘exemplary mother and wife’ was contrasted with the opposite negative image of the masculine ‘*maschietta*’ also emblematically named the ‘*donna crisi*’ and that was influenced by the fashionable flapper style so in vogue on the international scenes of Paris and New York and in the American cinema.¹⁷ This cosmopolitan female type was characterised by an excessive thinness, a desire for independence, as well as having a distinct eye for fashion. This, according to fascist ideologues, could have caused infertility as well as being the apparent sign of corruption and frivolity.¹⁸ In this sense, it is clear that fashion, understood as the personal desire to embellish one’s self and to be at ease with one’s personal body, was perceived as not in tune with the full-bodied and austere fascist woman and her main task to serve the nation. This is the reason why the government tried, with targeted political actions like the creation of the ONMI – ‘Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia’ – to foster maternity as an important ‘corollary’ of the uniform model of the exemplary mother and wife.¹⁹

However, female lives and aspirations were more complex and heterogenous than the regime’s monolithic model. This is well reflected in the press addressed to women. In fact, the way it depicted women during the ‘Ventennio’ reveals models, desires, and forms of escapism that do not entirely correspond to the needs and duties of the fascist exemplary mother and wife.²⁰

In her study of Italian women’s magazines which were published during the fascist dictatorship, Elisabetta Mondello has shown the extent to which models of womanhood in

¹⁶ De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 9.

¹⁷ Gnoli, Sofia, *La Donna, L’Eleganza, Il Fascismo, La Moda Italiana dalle Origini all’Ente Nazionale della Moda*, (Catania: Edizioni del Prisma, 2000) p. 45; and De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 209.

¹⁸ Leone, pp. 41-2.

¹⁹ Leone, pp. 36-7.

²⁰ Mondello, Elisabetta, *La nuova italiana: la donna nella stampa e nella cultura del ventennio*, (Roma: Riuniti, 1987), p. 111.

fashion press diverged from the single prototype proposed by fascism. Taking account of fascist journals, the political and catholic press, she was one of the first to include, within this broad framework, publications more centred on fashion. Considering the fashion press as an important source of investigation, Mondello underlines how it can be useful in revealing the complexity and the ambivalence of the representation of women during the fascist period. As a matter of fact, the fashion-oriented press was strongly marked by the coexistence of progress and tradition. In fashion magazines, the cosmopolitan woman often appears alongside 'the angel of the hearth' and the robust woman is set beside the slender one. This ambivalence of fascism can be found in publications addressed to higher classes as well as in magazines conceived for mass consumption. Dealing with the former, *Lidel*, *La Donna* and later *Bellezza* were luxurious magazines, created for the promotion of Italian 'Alta Moda' and also aimed at hindering the success of French magazines.²¹ Printed on fine paper, these 'elite' publications were designed for cultured women with high disposable incomes and used to attending social events.²² The pages of *Lidel* and *La Donna* show the advertisement of expensive products along with fashion illustrations, short stories and articles on art and literature.²³ They both offered contrasting models of womanhood. In *Lidel*, for instance, we can find the heavy influence of fascist ideology. As Gnoli notes, during 1930s the magazine shows its commitment to the fight against the thinness in women: by showing full-figured sketches of women, *Lidel*, with a proud tone, proclaimed its contribution to the 'campagna antidimagrante'.²⁴ By contrast, in an issue published in 1928, we can find the advertisement of slimming products, like the 'mexican slimming tea' or the 'cintura flessibile Guzzi' whose ad shows two women, one slim and the other robust, sided with the following caption: 'Ero grassa e sformata, ora... sembro un'altra. Questo miracolo lo devo all'uso della cintura flessibile Guzzi!'.²⁵

Another example of this 'schizophrenic' attitude can be found on the pages of *La Donna*. In a number published in 1933 we can find the image of Princess Maria Josè dressed up in a typical regional dress, in tune with the mood of the 'massaie rurali'. What is curious about this image, is that it is matched with a sketch of a refined woman dressed in the same costume that seems more a parody rather than a faithful drawing.²⁶ In fact, the 'peasant dress' is put on a slender model, physically closer to the sophisticated girl rather than the peasant housewife. Also, the short stories and the cultural pages - heavily influenced by Hollywood

²¹ Carrarini, Rita, 'Dalla cronaca alla storia: il ruolo delle riviste di moda', in *Conservare il Novecento: le carte della moda*, ed. by. G. Zagra, (Bologna: Associazione Italiana Biblioteche, 2009), p. 56.

²² *Lidel* 1919 - 1925; *La Donna* arises in 1906 while *Bellezza* in 1941. See Mondello, pp. 91-116.

²³ Mondello, p. 95.

²⁴ Vera, 'La moda: commenti e consigli', in *Lidel*, giugno 1932, quoted in Gnoli, p. 46.

²⁵ *Lidel*, 1928, n.6, p. 77.

²⁶ Paulicelli, Eugenia, *Fashion Under Fascism: Beyond the Black Shirt*, (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 22-3.

divas - were placed side by side with discordant fascist advice on how to manage the home and the family properly.²⁷

The magazine *Bellezza* can be a further example in this sense: established in 1941 by the 'Ente Nazionale della Moda' and printed by exploiting the new technique of 'rotocalcografia', it showed a better outlook and quality of images. By exploiting the advantages of this new technology, it increased the amount of advertisement addressed to women as housewives and household managers, while it continued to show fashion articles and sketches for refined and cosmopolitan women.

However, this ambivalence also marked magazines created for masses, including a broader readership belonging to the lower-middle classes. The 'rotocalco' and its faster printing technology, allowed publishing houses to increase the circulation of magazines. These 'rotocalchi' – *Novella* (1920), *Rakam* (1930), *Annabella* (1933), and *Grazia* (1938) to cite other examples²⁸ - in order to appeal the mass public, show the strong presence of the romance novel. The female protagonists of these stories ranged from the emancipated woman to a more 'traditional one'. As Mondello suggests, the presence of these two models of heroines reveals not only the heterogeneity of readership in the middle class and two opposing models of escapism, but again the fascism inability to convey a uniform escapist model for the masses.²⁹

This ambivalence regarding models of womanhood reveals the influence exerted by fascism on publication for women but, at the same time, shows how the control was not so tight as that practiced on the political press. As Gundle and Forgacs note, in terms of propaganda, only newspaper publishing was fascistised by the mid-1920s, while the production of fascist texts coexisted with the 'normal' ones.³⁰ Another case is represented by the weekly magazine *Oggi*, where Manzini published her articles signed with the pseudonym *Pamela*. This was a *rotocalco* founded in 1939 by the editor Angelo Rizzoli when the magazine *Omnibus*, founded by Leo Longanesi, was banned by the fascist censors. Rizzoli maintained the format of *Omnibus* but reduced the literary element in favour of current events and more modern outlook. Despite the neutrality that marked the style of the weekly *Oggi*, it was also banned by the regime in 1942.³¹

As it will be shown later, Manzini's articles show a model of cosmopolitan woman in tune with international trends. However, it will be argued that in some articles – especially those

²⁷ Mondello, p. 96.

²⁸ Mondello, p. 103-4.

²⁹ Mondello, p. 118.

³⁰ Forgacs, D., and Gundle, S. *Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), p. 216.

³¹ Farinelli, Giuseppe, *Storia Del Giornalismo Italiano: Dalle Origini Ai Giorni Nostri*. (Torino: UTET, 1997) pp. 293-5.

set in the past – she depicts a more traditional woman who is characterised by a sober attitude toward fashion and practices of personal embellishment.

The aversion to feminine practices of embellishment typical of fascism - because the canonical fascist woman must be the sober wife and mother - can be also taken as a further example of the ambivalent behaviour that characterised the regime in its overall lifetime. ‘Practices of embellishment’ can be understood as any attempt carried by women to dress up, buy new clothes for personal pleasure and wear make-up. All these activities were regarded by the regime as a waste of time and responsible for corrupting the so-called ‘bellezza muliebre’ of women. However, while fashion was rejected when it came to women’s practices of embellishment, it was overtly supported once it was inserted in the wider nationalist perspective. In fact, fashion was an important industry from an economic perspective and fascism recognised its potentiality. This can be observed during 1930s with the institution of important bodies - the EAMPNM that was later simplified to ENM. This was in charge of regulating national clothing and restoring, following the heritage of the Italian Renaissance, what was seen as the typical Italian style with which the population could easily identify.³² However, the other face of the same coin is represented by the parallel attempt to curb luxury, consumption and social mores - like women’s behaviour in society or their consumption habits. This will be observed, later in this research, in some articles of Manzini in which the model of the sober woman, who avoids make-up and ‘useless’ practices of personal adornment, is presented as the virtuous example of a modest womanly beauty.³³ This bears a strong similarity with the sumptuary laws that were issued during the Renaissance in order to hinder female vanity. It is very important to note that during fascism Manzini set a great portion of her articles in the 1200s, 1300s and the Renaissance. She preferred topics regarding female vanity, displaying how frivolity could be, most of the time, disastrous for the family’s assets, and the source of corruption of ‘natural’ beauty. However, fascism understood the full economic potential of fashion and the regime accordingly inserted it in a programme of nationalisation.

Just like that of women, the nationalisation of fashion was an important pillar of fascist propaganda. The regime boosted fashion to empower its economy, always moving into the well-oiled strategy of acting between tradition and innovation. It promoted Italian expertise, regional handmade products and, in parallel, it pushed, in an innovative way, the Italian chemical and textile industries to produce new textile fibres. In particular, ‘Rayon’

³²The EAMPNM (created in 1932) and the ENM (created in 1934) are both the acronyms of the ‘Ente autonomo per la mostra permanente nazionale della moda’ and of ‘Ente Nazionale della Moda’. Paulicelli, *Fashion Under Fascism*, pp. 20-1.

³³ 3/86 F. M.

represented the feather in the Italian textile industry's cap and even during the autarchic phase, Mussolini encouraged the research into local raw materials in order to guarantee the self-sufficiency of the nation.³⁴ This inevitably found resonance in fashion journalism that was directed toward the advertisement of the new fibres, becoming, along with 'cinegiornali', a powerful tool in the hands of the regime's propaganda.³⁵ Manzini's articles also participated in the promotion of the autarchic fibres. In an article published on 24th February 1940 in *Oggi* Manzini listed the new fibres that came from the Italian colony of Ethiopia: 'typha', she argued, belonged to the new colonial flora and it would provide fibres like the burlap. 'Sisal' from the Abyssinian flora, and 'ramie', a plant harvested near Tripoli, are all new raw materials produced by the Italian Empire that would boost the autarky and the production of fashionable goods. At the same time, Manzini also mentioned hemp and linen as the fibres in vogue in the autarchic phase.³⁶

In another article, the innovative materials produced by the chemical industry are also exalted, for example 'Lenasel', a particular textile that came from cellulose and had the characteristics of being anti-crease and similar to velvet.³⁷ Elsewhere, she talks about 'fioclin', a shiny texture made up of silk and linen.³⁸ The hint at the colonies does not occur only in terms of autarchic fibres. Rather, Manzini's fashion articles suggest the exotic fascination of the colonies in terms of images and objects. Talking about leather and fur, Manzini says how the Ethiopia campaign has stoked the collective imagination in fashion trends saying that 'l'Etiopia ci ha invogliati a "tentare" quest'autentico serpente e conquistarlo fino a renderlo docile mantello.'³⁹

Along with the advertising of fashion's new materials, the dictatorship held tradition in high regard. In this sense, fascism created a discourse around fashion both to promote the national industry and to italianise it. Knitwear, silk, and stockings - whose skilled production was proudly handed down since the Renaissance and taken as the symbol of 'italianità' - found their place in Manzini's articles. This is evident also in a set of publications that Manzini dedicated completely to the silk stockings produced by Pilade Franceschi, who is presented as the successor of this precious tradition but also as the absolute innovator in the technology of stockings.⁴⁰ Indeed, an important part of the propaganda aimed to encourage, inside the

³⁴ Paulicelli, *Fashion Under Fascism*, pp. 104 -7.

³⁵ Paulicelli shows how the newsreel - 'cinegiornali' - was a building part of the fascist propaganda. She mentions how in a newsreel on the National Exhibition of Textiles and Clothing in Turin in 1936 we can see the motto 'vestire italianamente' on the building where the exhibition was housed, while in a tracking shot the camera dwells on the word RAYON written in huge letters. Paulicelli, *Fashion Under Fascism*, p. 101.

³⁶ 3/36 F. M.

³⁷ 3/44 F. M.

³⁸ 3/46 F. M.

³⁹ 3/94 F. M.

⁴⁰ See 3/27, 3/28, 3/29, 3/30, 3/31 F. M.

internal market, both the production and the consumption of Italian goods and clothes. This was implemented through a set of initiatives: firstly, with the attempt to italianise the overall language and vocabulary of fashion. This responsibility was entrusted to Cesare Meano. In 1936 he wrote the *Commentario Dizionario Italiano della Moda* with the purpose to support the rising fashion industry linguistically and also to remove foreign terms and items from the Italian language.⁴¹ In addition, a greater effort was put into the creation of the concept of 'italianità' or Italian style that came to be identified with ease, elegance and comfort.⁴² Paulicelli has interestingly connected these features with Castiglione's concept of 'sprezzatura' which he mentioned in the *Book of the Courtier* published in 1521. This quality can be translated as *nonchalance*, the self-confidence or better the 'artful dishevelment' as employed by the successful courtier in the 'theatre' of the Renaissance court.⁴³ According to Paulicelli, this is an important quality that would shape and impress a unique mark on the concept of Italian style. Interestingly this is another feature that Manzini attributed to most of the fashion creations showcased in her articles: in fact, she considered 'elegance' and 'grace' the most sought-after attributes for women and men in fashion.⁴⁴

However, this also allows us to understand that the success of the glamorous 'Made in Italy' and the thriving Italian fashion industry in the aftermath of the Second World War did not happen overnight. Rather, despite the propagandistic coercion of fascism - on both fashion and women - its blossoming followed years of preparation.

The Second World War did, however, mark a profound rupture in Italian history. Worn out by the dictatorship and by military events, the nation emerged from the worldwide conflict with serious damages to its economy and social fabric. The autarchic phase had blocked any international commercial exchange and after the war the internal market was paralysed by the devastation of the transport network. The war caused the destruction of a third of Italy's national wealth, and industrial output was estimated at only a quarter of the pre-war levels.⁴⁵ In addition, Italy had to face serious problems of unemployment and inflation, worsened by the lack of any economic resource to purchase the raw materials needed to reconstruct.⁴⁶ From this perspective, the American occupation – which began in 1943 with the Sicily landing - was providential. The economic aid that the US allocated to Italy from 1946 was

⁴¹ 2/1 F. M.

⁴² Paulicelli Eugenia, 'Fashion Writing under the Fascist Regime: An Italian Dictionary and Commentary of Fashion by Cesare Meano, and Short Stories by Gianna Manzini, and Alba De Cespedes', in *Fashion Theory*, 8 (2004), 3-34, (p. 23).

⁴³ Paulicelli, Eugenia, 'Fashion: The Cultural Economy of Made in Italy', in *Fashion Practice*, 6 (2014), 155-174, (p.160).

⁴⁴ 3/38 F. M.

⁴⁵ White, Nicola, *Reconstructing Italian Fashion: America and the Development of the Italian Fashion Industry* (Berg, Oxford, 2000), p. 9.

⁴⁶ White, p. 10.

the tangible result of the economic opportunities seen by the Americans in Italian industry - alongside its invaluable know-how in these areas.⁴⁷ As a matter of fact, the Americans cared about the restoration of the Italian economy and its development for two important reasons. Firstly, both the international and US markets were short of consumer goods. The Italian products were highly sought-after by foreign buyers because of their high quality and low cost. Although Italy was devastated both politically and economically, there were some glimmers of hope. The most important factories were concentrated in the North of Italy which, even though some of its cities had been bombed, had been liberated by the partisans before the arrival of the Allies. This allowed the preservation of important economic centres in which the Americans sowed the seed of reconstruction, especially in the field of textiles. Secondly, the economic growth of Italy was closely related to its political situation: by avoiding poverty through a set of economical aids, the Americans would prevent the formation and the rise to power of the communist party.⁴⁸ By increasing its production, Italy would benefit from a market abroad and the US economy would profit from this development too by opening-up the new economies with the US trade and markets. The low cost and productiveness of labour, the adoption of new technologies, the high demand for textile and food consumer goods in the foreign countries created, between 1950s and 1960s, an exceptional economic boom, now referred to as the 'economic miracle'. The standard of living of Italians increased and, along with higher production, consumption also rose. The Marshall Plan did not only boost the Italian economy, but it also contributed to promoting the influence of American culture in Italy. For example, in terms of leisure activities Italy was enthralled by Hollywood stars and films that, although allowed during fascism, saw their definitive boom after 1945, influencing both the national cinema and the creation of stardom. This contributed to the re-emergence of an Italian glamour that was strongly enhanced by the display, both on and off screen, of Italian fashion creations by actresses and by the aristocracy.

However, as Réka Buckley has observed, the glamour that arose in Italy after 1945, can only partly be ascribed to US influence. In fact, glamour in fashion, star lifestyle and cinema were a special and 'domestic' mixture between 'aristocratic elegance and earthy naturalness' typical of Italy.⁴⁹ This proved that Italians did not passively absorb the cultural influence of the US. Rather, the years from the end of the war until the end of the economic miracle, can be regarded as a virtuous cultural exchange between these two nations. The demand from

⁴⁷ White, p. 13.

⁴⁸ White, p. 11.

⁴⁹ Buckley, Réka, 'Glamour and the Italian Female Film Stars of the 1950s', in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 28 (2008), 267-289, (p. 282).

US for new trends and the need to increase the mass production market encouraged the expansion of the Italian fashion industry that, in parallel to a redefinition of its economy, needed to reframe its own concept of style. In this sense, the complex creation of the Italian fashion industry went hand in hand with the redefinition of an Italian identity and culture.⁵⁰ However, it was not easy to define and theorise the main features of Italian style, nor to create a shared technical language of fashion. To do so, Italy drew from different fields, particularly architecture and art, in a complex mixture of tradition and innovation.⁵¹

Paradoxically, as Peppino Ortoleva suggests, this condensed into a common repertoire of imagery that immediately became the *milieu* and the distinguishing feature, recognisable world-wide, of Italian fashion.⁵² The evocation of the Renaissance, and the glorious past of Italy, along with a powerful visual imagery that saw the beautiful fashion creations photographed alongside the stunning monuments of Italy, are all part of the cultural heritage that defined and shaped what is Italian fashion and what 'Made in Italy' looks like. As Paulicelli notes, the plurality of Italian cities, with their traditions and creations, established a climate of thriving heterogeneity that would soon be united in a concept of Italian taste and unmistakable glamour.⁵³ Also, it is not surprising that during these years, fashion gained more importance in magazines. In the post-war period fashion journalism came to be the window to showcase the beautiful couture creations of Italian companies and also the important events in which Italian fashion was presented to the international public, especially the American one.⁵⁴ In this context there started to emerge the crucial figure of the fashion editor that, during the 1950s, was typified by the charismatic Carmel Snow, editor at Harper's Bazar. She is paradigmatic of the importance that journalists came to have in both the discovery and promotion abroad of Italian fashion. In fact, she was in charge of selecting the most interesting creations and sending them to American magazines. Her professional conduct influenced both American and Italian publishing, where the profession of fashion journalist came to be codified and structured as a trade in its own right.⁵⁵ However, the fashion industry and market were destined to change rapidly during these years, with the emergence of new actors in both the production of fashion (designers, journalists, and PR) and consumption (new market segments).

⁵⁰ This was further enhanced by new international equilibrium in the field of fashion that saw the unbeatable French fashion as not able anymore to fulfil the new standards of elegance for the masses. See Caratozzolo, Vittoria C., *Irene Brin: Italian Style in Fashion* (Milan: Marsilio, 2006), p. 53.

⁵¹ Stanfill, Sonnet, ed., *The Glamour of Italian Fashion since 1945*, (London: V&A Publishing, 2014), p. 48.

⁵² Stanfill, p. 48.

⁵³ Paulicelli, 'Fashion: The Cultural Economy of Made in Italy', pp. 155-74 and pp.158-9.

⁵⁴ Buckley, pp. 267- 289.

⁵⁵ Caratozzolo, p. 68.

Chapter II

Gianna Manzini as Case Study

This chapter is an overview of Gianna Manzini's literary and journalistic production which aims to describe the most significant themes of her narrative. The chapter is divided into three sections: the first one traces the phases of Manzini's life and the most recurrent themes in her novels, highlighting the influences that Manzini gained from the most important literary movements of the period. The second focuses on the use of emotions in her literary production: the process of visualisation, allowed by words, will be investigated to understand how Manzini's prose supports the conveyance of emotions into emotional expressions. The last section goes deep into her fashion production, delineating the main technical features of these publications.

2.1 Gianna Manzini: life, style and principal themes

The evocative blend between autobiography and lyricism, the poetic use of language and the style full of images, are some of the characteristics that mark the literary production of the Tuscan writer Gianna Manzini (1896-1974). These characteristics made her a prominent representative of the Italian literary scene of the twentieth century. On the other hand, her complexity and obscurity, both at the level of content and form, have determined her progressive oblivion in academia, contributing also to a serious lack of translations of her novels into foreign languages.⁵⁶

Manzini was born in Pistoia in 1896, and she was the only child of a middle-class housewife, Leonilda Mazzoncini and the anarchist and anti-fascist Giuseppe Manzini.⁵⁷ The value that her parents had in Manzini's life emerges in some of her literary outputs. In particular, the late novels *Ritratto in piedi* and *Sulla soglia* are respectively the evocation of the heroic aura of the father and the portrait of her mother's sense of protection.⁵⁸ According to Alba Amoia, these masterpieces make her the most important representative of the

⁵⁶ 'Although a few of her works have been translated into various European languages, only one short story has been rendered in English, perhaps because her style and syntax defy rhythmic translations into the English language' see Amoia, Alba, *20th-century Italian Women Writers – The Feminine experience* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1996), p. 28.

⁵⁷ Giuseppe Manzini died prematurely of a heart attack in 1925 in the mountain village Cutigliano after being caught by Mussolini's lackeys.

⁵⁸ Manzini, Gianna, *Ritratto in piedi*, (Milano: Mondadori, 1971) and Manzini, Gianna, *Sulla soglia*, (Milano: Mondadori, 1973).

experimental approach to the 'literature of memory'.⁵⁹ Following the erratic pattern of memories and psychological or internal time, these novels exemplify the autobiographical inclinations of the author, as well as her tendency to describe the psychology and the emotions of the characters. The free movement between the writer's autobiography and the feelings of her characters will soon become the hallmark of her style.

Emblematic of what Enzo Panareo calls 'la doppia avventura, personale e intellettuale' is Manzini's conception of the 'romanzo da fare', always in progress. In creating a novel, she appears to be translating her experiences and feelings into narrative material.⁶⁰ The words of Riccardo Rossi – who is the protagonist of *Un'altra cosa* – clarify Manzini's interweaving between art and life: 'Non capivo perchè un romanzo ideato nella prima giovinezza continuasse ad assillarmi e a tentarmi. Per anni ho seguito a prendere appunti, a svilupparlo e a modificarlo fra me e me. Forse, girando intorno a quel tema, sollecitavo anche un mio chiarimento'.⁶¹ These words, pronounced by Riccardo Rossi, appear to echo Manzini's own attitude regarding the writing process.

The transfer to Florence in 1916, after she completed high school, can be regarded as a decisive step in her career. In fact, it allowed Manzini to be in contact with the thriving cultural environment of the city. Permeated by the cultural influences of the hermetic movement, Florence was the setting of the literary debates that occurred in Italy between the two wars. After graduating in literature at the University of Florence, Manzini immersed herself in the literary scene of the city publishing, from 1929 to 1932, short stories on *Solaria* (1926 -1936). This journal was deeply influenced by two other important publications: *La Voce* and *La Ronda* which both affected Manzini's earlier production in the use of the *prosa d'arte* (lyric prose style), especially in her first novel *Tempo Innamorato* published in 1928.⁶²

Following the lessons of *prosa d'arte* theorised by the editors of *La Voce*, Manzini's novels were characterised by linguistic preciousness and by a high regard for style. By leaving apart 'any moralistic or political contamination', the *prosa d'arte* was concerned with creating a short and self-sufficient literary piece, intensely autobiographical and lyrical with a great emphasis on its aesthetic outlook and form. According to Lia Fava Guzzetta, *La Ronda* also contributed to making Manzini's style 'evocative, rich in metaphors, refined and

⁵⁹ Amoia, p. 29.

⁶⁰ Panareo, Enzo. *Invito alla Lettura di Gianna Manzini* (Milano: Mursia, 1977), p. 116.

⁶¹ Manzini, Gianna, *Un'altra cosa*, (Milano: Mondadori 1961), quoted in Panareo p. 117.

⁶² *La Voce* (1908-1916) and *La Ronda* (1919-1923) were two literary journals of primary importance in Italy. They allowed young poets and writers to be in touch with European literature. Both these journals contributed to the rise of another key journal, *Solaria* that attracted authors like Eugenio Montale and Carlo Emilio Gadda.

controlled'.⁶³ In addition, Umberto Marvardi pointed out that her narrative is made up of the synthesis of two opposing forces: the first one is the 'literary exercise' understood as formal perfection in her prose (that is the influence of the *prosa d'arte* and of *La Ronda*); the second one is the tendency to feel out the human mind.⁶⁴ These features can also be found in her fashion journalism. Below, in Chapter Four, it will also be shown how she combines the use of poetic prose with the depiction of the emotional world of the protagonists of her fashion articles.

As Panareo notes *La Ronda* and *La Voce* were not the only journals which influenced her narrative.⁶⁵ The autobiographical element, along with the investigation of the inner world of the characters was influenced by another literary journal of the period: *Solaria*.⁶⁶ This journal, by introducing innovations into the traditional structure of the novel, pushed Manzini towards a new conception of the contemporary novel that, in the attempt to be freed from the refinement of the lyric style, was trying to find new ways to be more 'human' and close to the everyday life situations of characters.⁶⁷ Following this route, *Lettera all'editore*⁶⁸ marks a watershed in Manzini's literary activity in terms of the structure of her novels and the development of psychological profiles of her characters.⁶⁹ This work shows the author's urgency to review her artistic and stylistic positions: in a mixture of confessional, epistolary and autobiographical features, she deploys first-person interventions which challenge the conventions of the traditional novel - the plot and temporal unity for instance - in order to undermine the role of the author, the narrator, the reader and the text itself.

Writing becomes both a process of discovery of the author's self and of her characters. She says: 'Il vero romanzo per me consiste nei punti di concomitanza dell'intreccio con alcuni episodi della mia vita.'⁷⁰ In this sense, writing a novel entails a literary elaboration of her emotions creating a mutual dialectic between her art and life, enabling what Anna Nozzoli has labelled as 'scambio tra esercizio interpretativo e processo artistico'.⁷¹ As said before, in *Un'altra cosa* it is possible to find many introspective passages that can provide an

⁶³ Fava Guzzetta defines her style as 'stile verticale e teso alle evocazioni, ricco di metafore, refinissimo e sorvegliato' in Fava Guzzetta, Lia, *Solaria e La Narrativa Italiana Intorno al 1930* (Ravenna: Longo, 1973) p. 199.

⁶⁴ Marvardi, Umberto, 1962 quoted in Panareo, p. 131.

⁶⁵ Panareo, p. 114.

⁶⁶ Gianna Manzini, consistently with the spirit of *Solaria*, always expressed an appreciation for European literature. In particular, the reading of Virginia Woolf was crucial in shaping her style, her poetic tone and the 'visionary ability' that allowed her to proceed, according to a critical definition given by Eurialo De Michelis 'per scatti e baleni'.

⁶⁷ Fava Guzzetta, *Solaria e La Narrativa Italiana Intorno al 1930*, pp. 20-1.

⁶⁸ Manzini, Gianna, *Lettera all'editore*, (Firenze: Sansoni, 1945).

⁶⁹ Fava Guzzetta, *Solaria e La Narrativa Italiana Intorno al 1930*, pp. 20-1.

⁷⁰ Gianna Manzini in *Lettera all'editore*, quoted in Panareo p.116.

⁷¹ Nozzoli, Anna, 'I ritratti della Manzini', in Forti, Marco, ed., *Gianna Manzini tra letteratura e vita, Atti del Convegno, Pistoia - Firenze 27-28-29 maggio 1983* (Milano: Mondadori, 1985), 131-144, (p. 137).

example as the protagonist Riccardo Rossi who affirms how the writing of his novel was meant as a 'self-clarification'.⁷²

To return to the most important phases of Manzini's life, she lived in Florence throughout the consolidation of the fascist regime (1922-1935), marrying, in 1920, the journalist Bruno Fallaci. During this period, she put together anthologies of short stories previously published in newspapers and journals.⁷³ This approach was in great part imposed by the economic restrictions that prevented her very often from complete dedication to the writing of a longer novel.⁷⁴

In 1930, after divorcing from Bruno Fallaci, she moved to Rome. The city represented a fresh start for Manzini, and she also fell in love with the literary critic Enrico Falqui - opening a distinctive period in her life that finds echoes in her literary output. *Un filo di Brezza*, published in 1936, can be taken as a significant example of the 'poetics of objects', focusing on landscapes, nature and animals all of them transfigured in a completely personal, and intimate way.⁷⁵ The years between 1940 and 1950 were extremely prolific for Manzini: the selection of short stories *Rive Remote* was published by Mondadori in 1940 and she also consolidated her career as a fashion writer, which had begun in 1935 with the collaboration with *Il Giornale d'Italia*.

However, the works produced in this period show the effects of Manzini's detachment from Tuscany and the deep sense of solitude that she experienced during the Roman years. As a consequence, the theme of loneliness became central in her novels: the solitude is a feeling frequently experienced by her characters. This can provide evidence once more of the possible connections between what happened during her life and her artistic process.⁷⁶

Another theme in Manzini's literature is illness, which is closely explored in connection with body and convalescence: Manzini weaved it into her novels with strong autobiographical connotations and in *La Sparviera* it reached its full maturity.⁷⁷ Through the history of Giovanni, a child affected by a chronic cough that eventually kills him after he grows up to

⁷² Manzini, Gianna, *Un'altra cosa*, (Mondadori: Milano, 1961), quoted in Panareo, p.117.

⁷³ Examples can be the anthologies *Incontro col falco* (Milano: Corbaccio, 1929); *Boscovivo* (Milano: Treves, 1932).

⁷⁴ The economic restrictions and the impossibility to dedicate her time to complete writing of a novel harassed Manzini throughout her life. Also, the fashion journalistic activity was felt as oppressive and as an obstacle that eventually would have curbed her desire to write a 'serious' novel. In Manzini's correspondence with the editor Bruno Mondadori, she called her journalistic activity as 'facchinaggio'. See Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano, Archivio Storico Arnoldo Mondadori editore, *Arnoldo Mondadori*, fasc. Gianna Manzini e Arnoldo Mondadori, Roma 20 gennaio 1941, ms.

⁷⁵ Forti, Marco, ed., *Gianna Manzini tra letteratura e vita, Atti del Convegno Pistoia - Firenze 27-28-29 maggio 1983* (Milano: Fondazione Alberto e Arnoldo Mondadori, 1955).

⁷⁶ Panareo, p. 107.

⁷⁷ Manzini, Gianna, *La sparviera* (Milano: Mondadori, 1956).

become an actor, the theme of illness, creativity and isolation is fully explored.⁷⁸ Manzini thus imparted to her characters the respiratory illness that affected her entire life. Illness is seen as a moment of extreme clarity of mind: the body is sick but the soul is clear.⁷⁹ For this reason, in a controversial way, illness became, in her view, the *milieu*, the tangible symbol of her femininity: 'A woman is really a woman when she is sick' she wrote in 1929.⁸⁰

Womanhood is another theme widely explored in her novels. Here Manzini shows different types of womanhood: from the self-abnegation of Clementina in *Tempo Innamorato* to the irreverence of Antonia in *Un'altra cosa*. This heterogeneous pattern of female figures allows us to trace, throughout the career of the author, the development from the 'woman-angel' to a more emancipated ideal of woman. However, in Manzini's view 'being feminine' cannot be separated from being woman. This clearly emerges in her journalistic production. Specifically, this concept is explicitly stated in a set of articles that Manzini published between the 1960s and the 1970s.⁸¹ In tackling the issue of female emancipation in these publications, she acknowledges the importance that rights, freedom, and equality play in women's lives. While she recognises the achievements reached by women in the labour market, she also underlines that much remains to be done. However, she warns her readers that fighting for equality must not entail the loss of 'grace' and 'elegance'.⁸² In fact, those are the main qualities that Manzini attributed to femininity and that can be found whenever she deals with fashion in relation to women. In this perspective, she deplores women who 'arrogantly' show off the conquest of their freedom and that, as a consequence, find themselves using the same tools and strategies of oppression which are employed by men. This idea also emerges in relation to women's writings and what in Italy has been called 'letteratura femminile':⁸³ in the article 'Scacciata dal paradiso' Manzini shows how women, being removed from their role of 'heroines' in novels written by male authors, redeemed themselves by becoming 'authors' rather than characters. By dedicating themselves to the activity of writing, women struggle for their social rights and 'put their complaint down in black and white.' However, Manzini suggests once more that women writers should not

⁷⁸ Russel, Rinaldina, ed., *Italian Women Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 212.

⁷⁹ Panareo, p. 111.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Amoia, p. 29.

⁸¹ Manzini, Gianna, 'Scacciata dal paradiso', *Corriere della Sera*, 1st June 1963; Manzini, Gianna 'La rivincita della donna', *Gioia*, 2nd April 1971, p. 13.

⁸² See 'La rivincita della donna', in *Gioia*, 2nd April 1971, p. 13. ' [...] sopraffatte dal proprio impeto, esse credono di adeguarvisi, ostentando una sorta di esteriore arroganza: trasandatezza, spesso d'ogni segno di pur elementare garbo, modi vagamente teppistici [...] che asprezza, che aria incattivita! [...] a rimetterci è stata dunque la grazia, il dono essenziale di una donna, il più accaparrante dei doni'.

⁸³ As Sivieri reports, 'female literature' was a category coined by Benedetto Croce in 1922 in *Letteratura della Nuova Italia*. See Manzini and Sivieri, p. 224.

circumscribe their activity to something written by 'women for women'. This risks to creating a label of 'female literature' that can only segregate them further.

After her calm and elegant battle for women's rights in the latter phases of her life, Manzini died on 31st August 1974 in Rome, overwhelmed by her respiratory illness. Despite health problems, she managed to conclude her last novel - *Sulla soglia* - dedicated to her mother. This was an important satisfaction for Manzini who, by completing her masterpiece, got her own way over death. Writing was always likened to life by Manzini. Words had an active role and in her view were always related to the concept of mobility in contrast with immobility, that is death. Manzini believed that art, closely identified with words and writing, could grant eternity.⁸⁴

2.2 Emotions in Manzini's novels

The concept of emotions in Manzini must be defined and circumscribed: this section is thus designed to explain what it is meant by emotions in Manzini's narrative and how her words and style are important tools to both enhance and convey feelings. It is clear that we always talk about emotions having in mind the literary persona of Manzini and not the real one.

In this way, even when she inserted her autobiography in novels, she did so to understand her personal artistic process, to comprehend her life but always under the transfiguration of literature and her literary persona.⁸⁵

When it comes to literature, it is relatively easy to identify and analyse how emotions are expressed in writings. Emotions have been identified as a significant feature of Manzini's fictional writing. In fact, Miceli Jeffries has found in Manzini's work a combination of 'emotion and intelligence, culture and nature, refinement and instinct.'⁸⁶ Similarly, Luti recognized, in Manzini, 'un abbandono incondizionato al flusso delle emozioni oggettuali'.⁸⁷ His essay was also crucial in pinpointing two important features of Manzini's prose that back up the centrality of emotions in her prose. He talks about 'visività' and 'introspezione'.

⁸⁴ Amoia, p. 36.

⁸⁵ Miceli Jeffries, Giovanna, 'Gianna Manzini's Poetics of Verbal Visualisation', in *Contemporary Women Writers in Italy: A Modern Renaissance*, ed. by S. M. Aricò (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990) p. 92.

⁸⁶ Miceli Jeffries p. 93. See also See Ulivo, Ferruccio. 'Narrativa Emozionale di Gianna Manzini' In *Novecento*, ed. by G. Grana, (Milano: Marzorati, 1980).

⁸⁷ Giorgio Luti acknowledges how at the beginning of her career Manzini's novels are characterised by 'un abbandono incondizionato al flusso delle emozioni oggettuali e successivamente ad un'analisi più sorvegliata. Gianna Manzini raggiungerebbe, sin dagli esordi, una rara qualità di penetrazione memoriale e una sensibile attualizzazione dell'immagine seguendo l'accumulo delle sensazioni nell'intimità del personaggio'. Luti, Giorgio, 'Scrittura e tempo narrativo nei Racconti di Gianna Manzini', in *Gianna Manzini tra letteratura e vita, Atti del Convegno, Pistoia – Firenze 27-28-29 maggio 1983*, ed. by M. Forti (Milano: Fondazione Alberto e Arnoldo Mondadori, 1985) pp. 93-107, (p. 95).

These qualities are exploited by Manzini through ‘un uso estensivo delle sue capacità sensoriali’ that would allow her ‘una rara qualità di penetrazione memoriale e al tempo stesso una sensibile attuazione dell’immagine seguendo l’accumulo delle sensazioni nell’intimità più segreta del meccanismo psichico del personaggio’.⁸⁸ In this perspective the so-called ‘metafora dell’occhio’ comes to be used by Luti to represent the modes of narration that Manzini employs when she tries to grasp and write all the sensations of her characters.⁸⁹ Manzini, to render the accumulations and sensations that both reality and memory give her, exploits the possibilities of the linguistic prose, especially in her careful lexical choices. Therefore, the linguistic element is important in following the path of her emotional interchange with her characters. However, scholarship has not given much emphasis to emotions and to the heuristic power that words can have in disclosing the emotions of characters and objects in her fashion production.

As a matter of fact, the selection of words plays an important role in Manzini’s stylistic and artistic process. They allow what Miceli Jeffries has recognised as ‘visual fragmentation’ and the ‘descriptive impressionism’ that show her tendency to proceed by analogies, without following any linear or logical historical time.⁹⁰ According to Amoia, Manzini looks principally for the representation of the effect, rather than the thing or the person. In this practice, she can be compared to what Mallarmè has theorised as ‘pure notion’, that is the ‘uncontaminated meaning of the signified.’⁹¹ Further to this, Amoia has also noted how, regarded in this perspective, Manzini is an exception to Julia Kristeva’s affirmation according to which ‘women writers stylistically fail to carry out the systematic dissection of language and lack a concern for musical forms in composition.’⁹² The bent toward a narration completely structured on agglomeration and non-linear structure, reflects also the importance that the recollection of memories has in her novels. Manzini’s narration is an art of temporality that throughout the recovery of past events allows also the rehabilitation of the emotions related to that event.

According to Miceli Jeffries, literature is for Manzini the means *par excellence* to describe but more importantly to understand reality. Words enable the active penetration of life allowing Manzini for the comprehension of the deep layers of the outer and inner world.⁹³ The role of the writer, according to Manzini, is to clarify the reality that the superficial experience and historical events would obscure. In fact, clarity is not synonymous with

⁸⁸ Luti, p. 96.

⁸⁹ Luti, p. 96.

⁹⁰ Miceli Jeffries, pp. 98-102.

⁹¹ Amoia, p. 37.

⁹² Rosalind Jones, on Kristeva ‘Julia Kristeva on Femininity: The Limits of a Semiotic Politics’, in *Feminist Review* 18 (1984), 56-73.

⁹³ Miceli Jeffries, pp. 93-4.

objectivity, rather it means the representation of reality actualised by an endless quest of meaning under the ‘veil of things.’⁹⁴

The sentence ‘What else is art for me if not an instrument for finding life behind life?’⁹⁵ best sums up the heuristic task that Manzini bestows on words, and, therefore, that she ascribed to the writer's creative/artistic process.

The study conducted by Miceli Jeffries on Manzini's ‘visuality’ can explain the role of clarification that Manzini ascribes to her prose. In fact, key in the study of Manzini's emotional expressions will be what Miceli Jeffries has labelled as ‘the poetics of verbal visualization’.⁹⁶

In Manzini's prose, visuality has twofold meaning and function. Firstly, it can be understood as the process put on stage by her characters in their progression from a condition of metaphorical obscurity to that of clarity throughout the course of the story. This passage means a process of knowledge and self-discovery in Manzini's characters. Secondly, visuality is the capacity of Manzini to artistically arrange words in complex and refined images to vividly put in front of the reader's eyes the endless process of discovery of reality that she describes and experiences.⁹⁷ Analogies, analogical transfiguration, and metaphors are all stylistic tools that allow the readers the visualisation of things. For example, in the sentence ‘You are the alabaster lamp with a flame inside’,⁹⁸ the double metaphor of light, allows the reader to perceive, at the same time, the opaque outer complexion of Manzini's mother and the burning flame that is the quality of her soul. This metaphor, understood in the wider context of the novel *Sulla soglia*, is also indicative of the narrator's path in her personal understanding of the maternal figure, enacted through the recovery of memories. As illustrated in the following extract, in *Sulla soglia* we can fully understand the process of description that is carried out by mixing images and sensations. Here, Manzini, in reproducing an emotion which originated in an encounter with a child in the novel, arranges words in a way that we can visualise and feel the impression given by one child: ‘Un rosa soffuso gli sfumava i lineamenti in un vapore, in un fiato di vita. [...] Eppure, un piccolo lume di risveglio, grazia, intelligenza della carne, dono e fame, palpitò su quelle labbra che

⁹⁴ Miceli Jeffries, p. 94.

⁹⁵ Manzini, Gianna, *Sulla soglia* (Milano: Mondadori, 1973), quoted in Miceli Jeffries, p. 12. Examples of the importance that she gave to poetics and art can be found in the novel *Forte come un leone* where the author believes that writing can foster ‘an incessant actualization of life’.

⁹⁶ Miceli Jeffries, p. 94.

⁹⁷ This practice nears the writings of Manzini to *ekphrasis*, that literally means ‘to depict throughout the usage of words.’ In this sense, the emotional charge gained throughout rhetorical devices, along with her sensibility in describing colours, can be all taken as an example to evoke what is visually conveyed by fashion.

⁹⁸ Manzini, Gianna. *Ritratto in piedi* (Milano: Mondadori, 1970) p. 90, quoted in Miceli Jeffries, p. 103.

leggerissime, incerte, si accostarono, si chiusero sulla mia guancia, quasi schioccarono per figurare questa gran cosa d'amore. N'ebbi il cuore inondato'.⁹⁹

Words thus disclose the narrator's reality and that of her characters. Furthermore, rhetorical figures of speech like synesthesia, oxymorons and rhetorical questions,¹⁰⁰ are all important underpinnings for the creation of an evocative and expressive lyric prose that sustains Manzini's emotional quest, along with other syntactical devices like progressive and regressive constructions,¹⁰¹ the nominal sentence, the monologue and, more importantly, the use of punctuation.¹⁰² The latter creates frequent and noticeable pauses in the text contributing to an effect of a controlled prose. All of these stylistic features corroborate what has been arguably recognised by literary criticism, that is to say, that Manzini 'thinks according to images'.¹⁰³ This complex mixture of visual capacity and self-exploration can be read as the distinctive feature of her production.¹⁰⁴

Strongly connected to the introspective task ascribed to words is the objective correlative, a rhetorical device that can be found also in Manzini's fashion production. The so-called 'mondo oggettuale' allows Manzini to describe and investigate via things the inner reality of her personages. Examples are the details and objects that allow the author for the subtle penetration inside thoughts, feelings and memories of characters. In *Sulla Soglia*, the evocation of her mother's femininity lingers on the colours and textures that a dressmaker employs in making a dress for her, allowing for a cross section of her mother's psychology:¹⁰⁵

[...] Ti alzasti. Drappeggiandoti addosso il tessuto, ritrovavi altezza e fierezza. Eri bellissima. Il vestito ideato ti dette una solennità fragile. [...] Scoprivisti in te una bellezza che ti turbava [...]. Dopo un passo e due, ti vidi fermarti [...]. Toccarti era come parlare a te stessa da sola. La vanità, con uno scatto geniale, superando tutto, ti portò su un precipizio di morbide promesse. Come rinnegarla, la vanità, così alta così regale? [...] anche la sinistra lasciò la presa di quel tessuto che ricadde fino ai piedi.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Manzini, Gianna. *Sulla soglia* (Milano: Mondadori, 1973) pp.132-3 quoted in Di Monte, Francesca, 'Gianna Manzini: la femminilità tra realtà e invenzione narrativa', in *Triplice Specchio: l'ago, la penna, il registro di classe. Uno sguardo sul femminile otto/novecentesco*, ed. by Lia Fava Guzzetta and others (Pesaro: Metauro, 2006), pp. 125-175, (p. 126).

¹⁰⁰ This will be deployed in her fashion writing. See the following chapter below and Bo, Carlo, 'Note sull'arte di Gianna Manzini', in *Convivium*, 1 (1938), 31-8, (p. 33).

¹⁰¹ Miceli Jeffries, p. 93.

¹⁰² Luti, p. 104.

¹⁰³ De Robertis, Giuseppe, 'L'arte della Manzini', in G. Manzini, *Venti racconti*, Milano, 1941. Quoted in Forti, p. 99.

¹⁰⁴ Luti, p. 96.

¹⁰⁵ Di Monte, p. 129.

¹⁰⁶ Manzini, Gianna, *Sulla soglia* (Milan: Mondadori, 1973) quoted in Di Monte pp. 106-9.

The fabric gives her mother pride and self-confidence, while the dress is the means that assesses and defines her aura: the oxymoron ‘frail majesty’ enables us to perceive the feeling emanated by her mother’s beauty. At the same time, her movements, the act of touching the dress trying to adjust it are all characterised according to the haptic and hearing sense produced by the cloth that falls softly to her feet. All these details disclose the insecurities that her mother held regarding her beauty and femininity. The practice of lingering on objects - as something that completes and adds information about the inwardness of people – is also a recurring feature in Manzini’s fashion articles.

In the fourth chapter there will be a detailed analysis of how the ‘unconditional flux’ of emotions related to objects, the extensive usage of sensory capabilities, and the internal and dynamic juxtaposition of images and sensations will take place in Manzini’s fashion articles.

2.3 Manzini’s fashion production: features and outline of the corpus

This section focuses on Manzini’s production of fashion writings, detailing the chronological milestones of her collaboration with newspapers and magazines, and tracing the characteristics that defined her contribution to fashion press. The need to allocate a separate section for this production arises from the fact that Manzini’s fashion activity has been always included and studied along with her literary outputs: this was at the expense of her fashion writing which was always considered ancillary and frivolous if compared to the ‘noble’ activity of writing a novel. This has also entailed that, being included in the analysis of her novels, her fashion journalism has never been explored in any depth.

For these reasons, the aim here is firstly to redeem her overall activity in fashion as worthy of a separate overview and analysis. Secondly, it is an attempt to bring together the literature that only recently has tried to analyse Manzini’s articles as something worthy of being studied on their own. In fact, the studies of Manzini’s fashion journalism are a valuable - and good - contribution to knowledge. However, existing studies of her fashion journalism only appears in the form of anthologies, making this production deserving of more attention from new and contemporary perspectives.

At present, we have only two anthologies that collect Manzini’s fashion articles. The first one, *La Moda di Vanessa* published in 2003 by Nicoletta Campanella, is a selection of articles that Manzini published in the newspaper *La Fiera Letteraria*, from 1946 to 1966, under the pseudonym *Vanessa*. Rather than following a chronological or thematic succession of articles, the collection gathers together what the editor regards as important pieces that

best sum up Manzini's idea of fashion, woman and society during the 1950s and 1960s, decades which were crucial for the consolidation of Italian fashion style.

The second anthology of articles by Manzini is *Scacciata dal paradiso*, edited in 2012 by Sarah Sivieri. The name of the collection, taken from Manzini's article published in *Il Corriere della Sera*, gives an important clue to the guiding principles of Sivieri's anthology.¹⁰⁷ The expression 'scacciata dal paradiso' suggests the 'sense of being abandoned' that women are experiencing in Manzini's time because of the sudden lack of attention that men are now giving to women. In Manzini's view, the word 'attention' denotes the male's attitude of considering women as 'idols' through an 'adorante e spesso imbroglionesca attenzione'. But now something is changing, Manzini suggests, because women are achieving important goals in their lives and they are actively pursuing their careers. They show their real capabilities, and this drives them away from what Manzini ironically calls 'the paradise' of male attention and care.

In this heterogeneous collection, we can find Manzini's thoughts on contemporary society. The relationship between younger and older generations, the problems of communication between men and women, along with important comments on female emancipation, are all tackled in Sivieri's book creating a multicoloured assembly of themes deeply rooted in Manzini's cultural context. In the postface, the editor underlines how the collection can be read as both complementary to Manzini's 'canonical' production and considered an original contribution to the traditional profile of the author.¹⁰⁸ In fact, especially in the section that contains articles related to contemporary issues and not included in her fashion production, it is possible to see Manzini's active engagement with the problems of her age.

In addition, the editor makes a good point in recognizing Manzini's articles as the 'preparatory material' of her novels. For instance, the theme of 'lack of communication' that is tackled in some of her articles has been completely reworked in the novel *Un'altra cosa*. At more general level, both the anthologies of Campanella and Sivieri are introduced by a general preface which presents Manzini's profile as writer and journalist. But the two anthologies present some limitations: *La moda di Vanessa*, gives an interesting insight into fashion in the Italian post-war period. The figure of the dressmaker, the emergence of the fashion designer along with the organization of runway shows are all elements shown in this anthology which is focused on how fashion developed in a specific span of time. Furthermore, this collection gathers articles only from *La Fiera Letteraria*. However, what is missed in this collection is a stylistic analysis and a broad perspective on the figure of

¹⁰⁷ Manzini, Gianna, 'Scacciata dal paradiso', *Il Corriere della Sera*, 1st June 1960.

¹⁰⁸ See Manzini and Sivieri, p. 209.

Manzini as fashion journalist. In a similar way, *Scacciata dal paradiso* does not provide an overall analysis of Manzini and her fashion persona *Pamela/Vanessa* and it does not analyse the role of emotions in her fashion production. Moreover, both these collections leave a great number of Manzini's articles unexplored.

As a matter of fact, visiting the three archives of the author - the Fondazione Mondadori in Milan, the Archivio del '900 and the small collection saved in the Falqui archive held in Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Rome - has been crucial to identify a significant number of articles that, despite being published in newspapers in Manzini's time, have never been subjected to academic attention. There are many forgotten articles signed by *Vanessa*, but the majority are those written exclusively for *Oggi* and signed *Pamela*. These articles deserve attention, particularly as they are written between the 1938 to 1942, coinciding with the last part of the fascist dictatorship and the beginning of the Second World War and vital for understanding the overall career of Manzini as a fashion contributor in a coherent way.

Manzini's first collaboration as fashion journalist started in 1935 for the newspaper *Il Giornale d'Italia*, where she uses the name *Vanessa*. From 1938 to 1942 she wrote for *Oggi* and under the pseudonym *Pamela* she dispensed fashion advice on the column 'La Vetrina delle donne'. In 1942 she collaborated with *Tempo*¹⁰⁹ and with *Epoca* – contributing to the column 'L'Italia Domanda' - while between 1946 and 1966 Manzini wrote mostly for *La Fiera Letteraria* contributing sporadically to *Il Corriere della Sera* and *Panorama*. The question of why she chose to use pseudonyms remains even now a mystery. Anna Panicali underlines that the 'fake' name was used in fashion journalism especially by men - Gabriele D'Annunzio and Stéphane Mallarmé for instance - to conceal their identity while writing about a matter usually dealt with by women.¹¹⁰ It is possible that Manzini want to distance herself from her fashion writing that was regarded as frivolous and of a lower quality. Manzini, once asked why she doesn't sign fashion articles with her real name said: 'It is simple: *Vanessa*, in the field of fashion, is better known than me'.¹¹¹ This shows how Manzini was reticent about the use of the pseudonym and scholars have attempted to make hypotheses regarding the nature and the choice of the two names. While there are no specific explanations regarding the choice of the name *Pamela*, Nicoletta Campanella suggests that the name *Vanessa* was inspired by the painter Vanessa Bell, Virginia Woolf's sister. The plausibility of this link is given by the double cultural reference that this name entails.

¹⁰⁹ *Tempo* 1939-1976 was a periodical edited by Mondadori and the 'antagonist' of the weekly *Oggi*.

¹¹⁰ Panicali, Anna, 'La moda "la più calunniata di tutti i tempi"', in AA.VV., *Gianna Manzini. Una voce del modernismo europeo*, (Pesaro: Metauro, 2008), pp. 129-151.

¹¹¹ "è semplice: *Vanessa*, nel campo della moda, è più conosciuta di me". This answer was given by Manzini during an interview on *La Fiera Letteraria* by G.A. Cibotto in November 21, 1965." Quoted in Panicali, p. 135.

Evidently, one of the important peculiarities of Manzini's fashion articles is the sensibility towards colours along with the ability to bring out the connection between art and fashion. This is in tune with the artistic profile of Vanessa Bell but also with the attention to details and the intimate writings that were the hallmarks of Virginia Woolf's literature.¹¹² This suggests how the name *Vanessa* can also symbolise the latent permeability of literature, life and fashion that marks Manzini's overall production. This also introduces an important characteristic of Manzini's fashion activity: the strong presence of cultural references. This is clear especially in articles signed by *Pamela* which are in between of a literary narration and a fashion chronicle. The cultivated prose of Manzini's articles gives them a literary quality sufficient to redeem fashion from the charge of being a frivolous subject.

This literary transfiguration of fashion conceals the activity of advertisement that is often attributed to fashion editors. Manzini is often called to advertise products but this 'commercial' aim is made more implicit by her style and cultivated quotations which reveal a more didactic and poetic tone. In her articles the need to artificially exalt the qualities of a dress - because she was asked to do so and also because this is the main task of fashion journalism - is absent or, when present, is concealed by the prose that stimulates the imagination/desires of the readers allowing them to be seduced by the careful choice of words, by the intense use of emotions that, along with the vivid depiction of everyday situations, allow readers to identify with the scenes described.

In this thesis, I have chosen to focus on *Pamela*'s articles - while bearing in mind the rest of Manzini's work - because this production shows a marked presence of historical and cultural references. These articles also show a heightened use of portraits and psychological profiles useful for the sound investigation into how a semiological analysis of these writings reveal the role of emotions in Italian twentieth-century fashion journalism.¹¹³

¹¹² Panicali, p. 133-4. Scholarship has widely recognised the influence that Virginia Woolf had on Manzini. See Fava Guzzetta, Lia, 'Gianna Manzini verso Virginia Woolf (passando per Pirandello)', in AA.VV., *Gianna Manzini. Una voce del modernismo europeo*, ed. by L. Fava Guzzetta and others (Pesaro: Metauro, 2008), pp. 9-25.

¹¹³ The list of articles will be shown in the final bibliography, provided by the archival sources and, where possible, of dates and magazines.

Chapter III

Theoretical framework

The study of emotions in fashion journalism demands the analysis of the way feelings are conveyed in fashion written expressions. Semiological analysis, along with the outline of emotions and emotional expressions in literary texts, constitutes the theoretical framework of this research. This chapter is thus divided into three sections. The first provides the outline of the semiological inquiry conducted by Roland Barthes on fashion written language, highlighting the priority which he gave to the written garment over photography; The second part blends William Reddy's theory of *emotives* with the studies conducted by Trip Glazer on emotional expressions, laying down the basis for discovering what kind of rhetorical devices can be employed in written discourse to convey and enhance the emotional power of fashion. The third part is an overview of the notions of implied author and reader in literary texts and how they can be applied to the narrative of Manzini's fashion articles.

3.1 Roland Barthes: Semiology of Written Fashion

This section is dedicated to Roland Barthes semiological approach to fashion writings.¹¹⁴ In particular, I will build on Barthes interests in sociology as the prerequisite for the comprehension of his semiology of fashion, following the development of his thought between 1958-1967, years that saw the blossoming of his theories in fashion. These studies reach their acme in 1967 with the publication of *The Fashion System*. In showing his complex architecture, my aim is to get a critical insight into the importance of written clothing inside *The Fashion System*. Particularly, I will focus on the concepts of *signifier* and *signified* and how they build up the *Rhetoric of fashion*.

Barthes's interest in semiology, as Paul Jobling argues, arose in the thriving cultural debate that included intellectuals like Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Julia Kristeva. They questioned issues of identity and the signification of high and low culture.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Roland Gérard Barthes (1915 -1980) was a French essayist and social and literary critic. His studies contributed to the establishment of seminal intellectual movements, like the structuralism, post-structuralism and New Criticism. See *Barthes, Roland*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc, 2018. Accessed 1st March 2019; Barthes, Roland, and A. Stafford, *The Language of Fashion* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), p. 23.

¹¹⁵ Jobling, Paul, 'Roland Barthes: Semiology and the Rhetorical Codes of Fashion', in *Thinking through Fashion: A Guide to Key Theorists*, ed. By A. Rocamora and A. Smelik, (London: IB Tauris, 2015) pp. 132-148, (p. 134).

In this scenario, following the path paved by Ferdinand de Saussure,¹¹⁶ Charles Sanders Peirce and Louis Hjelmslev,¹¹⁷ Barthes pioneered the application of the semiological method to fashion.¹¹⁸ Propounding that everything is a text, semiology sees human communication as a system of meanings.¹¹⁹ Language, in this view, is understood as the foundation of human experience in its totality.¹²⁰ Conceived as a system of meanings, fashion, like linguistic communication, can be envisioned as a sign that is constituted by the *signifier* that is the material substance of something – for example, the material clothes or the written words in fashion magazines - and by the *signified* that is a cultural element associated with the material signifier.¹²¹ The relationship between the signifier and the signified can be also found in linguistics and it was this affinity that drew Barthes' attention to fashion written language, rather than the real garment or the images. According to him, the linguistic method applied to fashion language, could prove the signifying nature of fashion. *The Fashion System* represents the peak of this approach: as the written garment is susceptible to linguistic/semiological analysis, he started with a synchronic examination of two French fashion magazines from June 1958 to June 1959: *Elle*, aimed at a wider readership, and *Le Jardin des Modes* that targeted a more elitist audience.¹²² By breaking down their phraseology into systems, he investigates the meanings produced in fashion in sentences like 'this year fuzzy fabric replace shaggy ones' that dictates in an authoritative and mythological manner what this year is fashionable and what is not, creating a kind of rhetoric which he will later analyse in the rhetorical system.¹²³

The essays that he wrote from 1957 to 1967, are crucial to trace the development of his theoretical reflections, that reach the definitive implementation of the semiological method in *The Fashion System*. In 1957, Barthes published 'History and Sociology of Clothing - Some Methodological Observations'¹²⁴ in which he deals with the methodological problems within the history of dress. This phase reflects Barthes's primary interests in the sociology of dress, and it is of primary importance to understand how Barthes builds on sociology to introduce his semiological method. At this stage, Barthes developed his conception of dress

¹¹⁶ While de Saussure saw linguistics as a branch of semiology, that is the general science of culture, Barthes argued, in reverse, that semiology is a branch of linguistics. Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 132.

¹¹⁷ Jobling, 'Roland Barthes: Semiology and the Rhetorical Codes of Fashion', p. 135.

¹¹⁸ This method understands human communication as divided into signs that are composed of signifier and signified. Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 119.

¹¹⁹ Jobling, 'Roland Barthes: Semiology and the Rhetorical Codes of Fashion', p. 146.

¹²⁰ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 82.

¹²¹ Jobling, 'Roland Barthes: Semiology and the Rhetorical Codes of Fashion', p. 135.

¹²² The restricted choice of magazines and in such a restricted period of time has exposed Roland Barthes to wide criticism. See Culler, Jonathan D, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 38-40.

¹²³ Jobling, 'Roland Barthes: Semiology and the Rhetorical Codes of Fashion', p. 133.

¹²⁴ Published in *Annales* 3 (July-Sept.)1957, 430-41; *Oeuvres complètes* vol.1, 741-751.

as a social structure, a functional network of forms and norms and a vehicle of meaning. He starts by showing the gaps that ancient archeologists, historians, and psychologists have left unresolved in the study of dress. The historians who preceded him recognised the epistemological issue intrinsic to the form¹²⁵ and tried to overcome it by outlining external and internal differences in vestimentary structures.¹²⁶ However, the most concerning methodological mistake was their conception of the garment as the signifier of a general exterior signified - namely the epoch, country and social class.¹²⁷ Indeed, the history of signifier and the history of signified, Barthes argues, cannot go hand in hand: fashion has its own rhythm, that is independent of the general history that supports it. In turn, history has a social time with its accelerations and decelerations.¹²⁸ Consequently, the meaning of clothing cannot be identified with the general course of history. According to Barthes psychologists haven't managed to link methodologically the history of clothes with its sociology. They were mainly concerned with defining and examining practices of protection and ornamentation without putting them inside a normative body that is society.¹²⁹ In this scenario, Barthes claims, it is important to restore a sociological dimension to the history of dress. What has been missed in this history is the consideration of fashion as an axiological system, a set of normative links and values - namely a structure - where we can find signifiers only if they are linked by a group of collective norms.¹³⁰ The historian and the sociologist must thus highlight and identify the normative connections that, at the social level, determine the value and the meaning of dress. Essentially, they must establish the relationships of value, that are defined by rules of matching, usage, constraints, and prohibitions.¹³¹ At this point Barthes explains how the saussurian linguistic method can enlighten the meaningfulness of clothing. Clothing, like language, has a sociological dimension and a syntactical nature.

Both language and dress are simultaneously structure and history, functional networks of forms and norms in flux and continuous change. Their single transformation will change the whole, producing a new structure.¹³² This led Barthes to pay attention to de Saussure's conceptualisation of language that is composed of *langue* - namely the norm, the social institution abstract and universal independent from the individual - and *parole* - the actual use of langue made by persons. By drawing on these two concepts, Barthes coined the

¹²⁵ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 4.

¹²⁶ The issue of fashion rhythms has been addressed by Kroeber, Alfred L., *Three Centuries of Women's Fashions, a quantitative Analysis*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1940).

¹²⁷ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 5.

¹²⁸ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 6.

¹²⁹ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 7.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 7.

¹³¹ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 7.

¹³² Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 7.

symmetrical notions of *dress* and *dressing* that compose the generic whole of *clothing*. Dress like *langue*, is the social model, the normative institution from which the individual takes his own clothing. Dressing, in parallel with *parole*, is the particular and personal use of the social norms made at the individual level and that could be observed only empirically.¹³³ This taxonomy exemplifies the dual nature of both clothing and language as collective and individual institutions and it also denotes the semantic relationship between dress and dressing, as vehicles of meaning.¹³⁴ However, dress is the stronger form of meaning, and by establishing a relationship between the individual and his group it can be the object of social inquiry. Vice versa, dressing only expresses the individual and his choices: consequently, its meaning is weaker.¹³⁵

Despite the fact that psychologists and psychoanalysts have tried to explain and give the coordinates for the meaningfulness of clothing - see the studies of Kiener and Flugel respectively¹³⁶ - it is only by a parallel with linguistic structures that Barthes has shown how dress, being worthy of sociological analysis, is a concentrate of meaning and, as a consequence a field worthy of semiological analysis.¹³⁷ This passage is decisive in order to comprehend why Barthes saw semiology as part of linguistics.¹³⁸ Dress is meaningful as far as it shows the degree of participation in the system and in the totality of social norms that constitute it. In this sense, a step toward the semiology of clothing is made. In the essay 'Elements of Sociology', Roland Barthes maintains that human phenomena in society must be interpreted through language:¹³⁹ as already said, Barthes' path toward the implementation of the semiology of fashion is deeply informed by linguistics. His conception of semiology as part of this discipline stems from the importance that he gave to human language as the foundation of meaning. Articulate language, Barthes argues, is a structure of such magnitude that any system of objects could not compete with it. Specifically, there is no total fashion without a discourse, without a speech that stages the process of signification – that is, allows the signifiers to correspond to signifieds - that describes and comments on clothing. The creation of meanings fuels fashion: they create a myth that is the primary engine of the

¹³³ To exemplify the scheme:

Language		Clothing	
Langue	Parole	Dress	Dressing

See Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 27.

¹³⁴ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 8.

¹³⁵ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, pp. 10-2.

¹³⁶ Barthes, Roland. 'Fr. Kiener : « Le Vêtement, La Mode Et l'Homme, Essai d'Interprétation Psychologique » J.C. Flugel, the Psychology of Clothes', *Annales*, vol. 15/no. 2, (1960), pp. 404-7.

¹³⁷ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 28.

¹³⁸ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 28.

¹³⁹ Barthes and Stafford, *The Language of Fashion*, p. 80.

constant renewal of fashion. The brief life of fashion fuels its desirability. In this sense, the fleeting nature of fashion enhances its value, and this becomes the essence of the perpetual cycle of rising and death that lasts one year. Therefore, discourses are pivotal in creating a mythology of fashion. Its purpose is to foster the annual novelty of fashion allowing, every time, for the implementation of economic goals intrinsic to fashion.

The *Fashion System* is conceived as the structural analysis of how clothes are delivered in fashion magazines. It focuses on fashion signs and the meanings that are attached to them whenever fashion discourse is created. Fashion is divided into three different systems: the *vestimentary code*, constituted by the real garment, the *terminological code* that shows clothes articulated by human language, and the *rhetorical code*, that deals with how fashion magazines, both in writing and images, create a phraseology that refers to the world of fashion and its myths. It follows that fashion is denoted at the terminological level and connoted at the rhetorical one: *denotation* is the technical description of the garment represented with its elements and functions. *Connotation*, on the other hand, is the poetic description of the object whose qualities are linked to a second meaning, to an image-repertoire that is the *world of fashion*.¹⁴⁰ It results that the concepts of denotation and connotation saturate fashion language on both the terminological and rhetorical levels respectively. In this complex stratification, which sees the overlapping of three systems of fashion, it is clear that the rhetorical level, being on top, encompasses the overall processes of connotation: it is at this stage that the garment is described technically and charged with additional meanings. This happens through different devices and procedures that will be outlined below in the study of the rhetorical system. In the analysis of Manzini's writings, I will apply the semiological method in order to identify the rhetoric of both signifier and signified. I will explore in detail how both the signifier and signified convey emotions and how the signifier sustains a world of fashion that tells us more about the way Manzini deals with fashion and her ideal readers. To that aim, the evaluation of the fashion rhetorical level will be the centrepiece of my analysis of Manzini's writing.

However, before going deeply into the exploration of how the rhetorical system is organised, it is important to underscore the convergence between the attention that Barthes gave to the written system of fashion and the appearance of Manzini's articles. Manzini's fashion articles generally show the strong presence of text instead of images and this depends on the type of magazine in which she wrote. For example, articles in *La Fiera Letteraria* and *Oggi* are only sporadically accompanied by images and this is not at all what would be expected in fashion journalism. This can be partly explained because both *La Fiera*

¹⁴⁰ Barthes, Roland, *The Fashion System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 236.

Letteraria and *Oggi* were not magazines specifically oriented to fashion like the rotocalco *Bellezza*, where fashion articles were always accompanied by photo shoots to display the collections. In addition, this lack of images in Manzini's articles - there are only a few exceptions like 'Calze storiche' 'L'antica parigina', 'Il vetro filato e i merletti' and 'Novità e sorprese' all published in *Oggi* and alongside one image only - is also related to the technical features of the magazine which was printed in broadsheet format where articles tended not to be accompanied by photographs.

In contrast, other publications like *Panorama*, even if not specifically focused on fashion, show, throughout the magazine, a wider employment of photos, in line with what happened in fashion publications. In fact, Manzini's articles here are usually accompanied by three images that display the collection presented in the article. In this case, as it will be shown in Chapter Four below, Manzini's fashion writings tell always something more than images. This does not mean that photos are not useful in the overall narrative of the article, but the verbal element empowers images and adds meanings and details to the visual element. Manzini's prose remains evocative even when images display explicitly the dresses showcased and her description is not made redundant by the picture.

This centrality given to words over images converges with the emphasis that Barthes gave to the written system over photography. In his view, image and written clothing do not have the same structure: the first is plastic while the second is verbal.¹⁴¹ The real object is 'translated' into a written one. However, as the semiologist notes, this 'translation' is original because it is not limited to rendering the object itself, risking being pleonastic regarding the image: rather the written garment adds something more to the description, having a set of functions that images do not have. The written clothing has what Barthes calls *function of knowledge* because it adds extra information that cannot be delivered by photography. Barthes reports the example of the detail that is hidden in photos because of the two-dimensional character of the image. Likewise, words can fix the reader's perception upon certain meanings conveyed by the image. This function is very important since Barthes has always ascribed to photography a certain polysemy that, paradoxically, makes its meaning less obvious. It is what Barthes calls the 'photographic paradox': photography depicts only what exists, being a 'slice of reality' where meanings become less obvious according to the context in which they appear. This happens because photography functions as sign where the signifier - that is the material substance that constitutes the image - refers to a 'floating chain' of signifieds - understood as the concepts that we associate to the signifier - and the

¹⁴¹ F/S, p. 3.

reader can choose some signified but ignore others.¹⁴² In this sense, Barthes says how written language prevents the freedom of the reader's eyes choosing in authoritative way, how to look at one fashion item.¹⁴³ Also, this can be connected to the *function of emphasis*¹⁴⁴ that the written clothing has over the image: language can stress the value of certain qualities, presenting the garment as fragmentary, rather than a whole as it happens in photography. In Barthes' example the written description 'the soft Shetland dress with a belt worn high and with a rose stuck on it' aims to emphasise certain qualities of the dress displayed in the image, that is to say the material, the belt and the detail of the rose. It follows that the described garment is the outcome of a series of choices.¹⁴⁵ However, Paul Jobling has reconsidered the issue of written/image clothing in Barthes, aiming to highlight the relationship according to an intertextual perspective. Jobling contested the vision that only written language adds information to the image, arguing that they are mutually reinforcing, and each one able to tell something different to the reader. In the end, Jobling recognises also how the phraseology outlined by Barthes is rather outdated and absent from the contemporary fashion spreads because verbal and visual rhetoric function on several different levels.¹⁴⁶ Nowadays the texts have been considerably reduced and images can reference to other ones creating phenomena of 'hyperreal narrative'.¹⁴⁷

Coming back to the outline of how Barthes builds up his rhetorical system, the following section will be an investigation of how he conceived the process of connotation, highlighting useful points for the analysis. As we can see in the appendix at the end of this thesis, the overarching presence of the rhetorical level on the top of the chart and its external ramification - namely the signified which Barthes calls the *world of fashion* - is enough to persuade us about the importance of the image-repertoire (the signified) to which the fashion rhetorical signifier refers. Moreover, it is also clear how rhetoric inevitably affects the system at the vestimentary level. Leaving apart the tricky explanation that Barthes offers in order to make this intersection clear,¹⁴⁸ the crucial thing is to understand that at the general level the rhetorical system has one signifier that is the *writing of fashion* and one signified that is the *ideology of fashion*. As the rhetorical signifier, the *writing of fashion* affects the vestimentary sign (with its signifier and signified): the rhetoric of the vestimentary sign is named the *poetics of fashion*. In the same way, the rhetorical signified (*the ideology of*

¹⁴² Jobling, Paul, *Fashion Spreads. Word and Image in Fashion Photography since 1980*, (Berg: Oxford, 1999), p. 88.

¹⁴³ F/S, p. 13.

¹⁴⁴ F/S, p. 14-5.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 15.

¹⁴⁶ Jobling, *Fashion Spreads*, p. 93.

¹⁴⁷ Baudrillard, Baudrillard, Jean, 'The Ecstasy of Communication', in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. By Hal Foster (London: Pluto 1985), pp. 126-134 quoted in Jobling, *Fashion Spreads*, p. 94.

¹⁴⁸ F/S, p. 225.

fashion) gives a representation of the world - that is the *world of fashion*. What follows is an outline of concepts like the *writing of fashion*, the *ideology of fashion*, the *poetics of clothing* and the *world of fashion* that are all pivotal mechanisms in the process of connotation. In the following section, I will provide a brief definition of them, discussing how those concepts could be grafted onto the analysis of Manzini's fashion journalism.

3.1.1 The Writing of Fashion and the Ideology of Fashion

The *writing of fashion* and the *ideology of fashion* are respectively the signifier and signified of the rhetorical system. As Barthes states in his analysis, fashion writings comprise a set of stylistic phenomena,¹⁴⁹ and ways of sentence composition whose task is to constitute the signifier of connotation. It follows that the rhetorical signifier uses devices - for example adjectives, metaphors, or more complex rhetorical features - rhyme play, couplets, and parataxis - in order to move the language of fashion from a level of transitivity - which is that of denotation - to that of intransitivity, namely the connotation. In this way, the *writing of fashion* comprises all the signifiers of connotation. The way the signifiers qualify a vestimentary object or the way they are organised, allows the sentence to connote and to refer to a particular 'mood' and to an emotional situation.¹⁵⁰ The signified of the rhetoric of fashion is the *ideology of fashion* and it has two distinctive features: it is latent and nebulous. The former characteristic can be ascribed to the external position that the rhetorical signified occupies in the overall system: it is placed at the extremes of connotation which means that it is part of a signification that is received through reasons, goal and images but not read through signs. Barthes gives an example to make this concept clear: when the magazine speaks of 'big brother sweaters' and not, as Barthes observes, 'men's sweaters', the concept of 'homeliness' is evoked - but not explicitly stated in the utterance - and it is perceived but not read by the reader. It happens that he/she receives a 'message structured enough for her to feel charged by it',¹⁵¹ even if it is not read. This also happens in Manzini's fashion writings and the latent signified can be found in the distinctive use that she made of colours. As it will be shown in the following chapter, the use of 'unpredictable' colour notations hides the reference to other implicit situations and concepts.

On the other hand, the nebulosity of the signifier is understood by Barthes as the confusing nature of the signified. This 'confusion' depends on the fact that in fashion 'there are only a

¹⁴⁹ Barthes divides these features into segmental and suprasegmental. F/S, pp. 227-8.

¹⁵⁰ F/S, p. 229.

¹⁵¹ F/S, p. 231.

few rhetorical signified for many signifiers'.¹⁵² To better clarify this point, Barthes gives the example of the sentence "coquettish without coquetry". The signifiers here are opposites but they refer to an idea of the world – an ideology of fashion – which ignores the opposites because in fashion a dress can be one thing and its contrary at the same time. In this sense, this rhetorical signified is compared by Barthes to a large nebula of 'undefined mass of concepts'¹⁵³ whose meaning depends on the individual who manipulates the message: his or her knowledge, feelings, morals, historical condition are all features that can influence the meaning of the signified. Even if in Manzini there is no trace of sentences in which the use of two opposites entails a lack of sense – like "coquettish without coquetry" – I deem very useful Barthes' idea that the decoding of the meaning of the 'nebula', which constitutes the ideology of fashion, depended on the cultural heritage, consciousness, and the historical background of those who interpreted the message.¹⁵⁴ How this concept works in Manzini will be analysed in relation to colours in Chapter Four.

3.1.2 The Poetics of Clothing - the Rhetoric of Signifier

The *poetics of clothing* is another substantial concept elaborated by Barthes. He assumes that the description of the garment can be the site of connotation if a secondary meaning is attached to its pure technical description. It is what Barthes calls the image-repertoire, the reservoir of meanings on which the language of fashion draws, in order to create its mythologies and dreams. He uses the term 'poetics' because the language creates a kind of narrative that enhances the qualities of the vestimentary object. In order to do it, the garment is related to a set of stereotypes, images that evoke certain ideas and atmospheres, what Barthes calls large semantic fields.¹⁵⁵ Cultural references, images drawn from nature, geography, history, art are all fields that provide fashion with images to which the garment described could refer.¹⁵⁶

I deem this conceptualisation an interesting model to uncover what kind of images Manzini uses for the connotation of the vestimentary sign and how this repertoire informs us of the way fashion was experienced both by Manzini and her readers. The construction of images could tell us more about the way fashion was consumed and personally experienced, and how Manzini would imagine her ideal reader. Furthermore, Barthes considers the poetics of

¹⁵² F/S, p. 232.

¹⁵³ F/S, p. 232.

¹⁵⁴ F/S, p. 233.

¹⁵⁵ F/S, p. 239.

¹⁵⁶ F/S, p. 240.

clothing as the barometer of the social status of the magazine's readership.¹⁵⁷ He observes how a poor poetics and consequently a high level of denotation corresponds to a cultured and high-end readership. Conversely, a language which is deeply connoted – that is, poetic and full of 'images' - is generally employed in magazines that have a more popular readership. Barthes explains that higher social classes, having the chance to afford the fashion item, do not need to read fashion writings characterised by strong connotation - what Barthes calls *Utopia* - in order to purchase the item. They can have access to it, if they want, and the basic denotation would be enough to ensure their purchase and their participation in the fashion dream. On the other hand, the dream facilitated through connotation is the only way for lower classes to make use of fashion: even if not real, the item is enjoyed. However, contrary to Barthes' idea, the connotative prose of Manzini can be seen to be addressed to a cultivated reader. This can be assumed by her poetic language and by the complex stylistic devices that she uses. Nevertheless, the strong presence of the cultural elements, historical references, and literary quotations presumes a certain degree of education in readers who approached Manzini's texts. Even if a higher level of education does not necessarily imply a higher social class of course, in Manzini's time it often did because of low levels of literacy of lower classes and the easier access to education for higher social classes. For these reasons, while considering valuable Barthes' thought regarding the relationship between highly connoted writings and the social class of the readers, it is not possible to apply this equivalence to Manzini's writings unconditionally.

3.1.3 The World of Fashion - the Rhetoric of Signified

The *world of fashion* is realised by two rhetorical devices: metaphor and parataxis, that have to create an aura around certain situations or psychological essences pertaining to the world - for example the morning, the weekend, the spring, the secretary - the simple semantic units of the vestimentary code or the reader herself. While metaphor transforms what is usual into something original, the parataxis acts as an extension of the mood, evoked by the metaphor, to other sentences. The result is a conglomerate of objects and situations linked by a narrative that veils and hides the structural nature of the vestimentary code, in order to create an event in which all elements are closely connected by links of value.¹⁵⁸ These events are called 'stereotypes'¹⁵⁹ for their fictional tone under which they mask the original structure of the vestimentary code. Within the rhetoric of signified, Fashion is thus called to answer four

¹⁵⁷ F/S, p. 244.

¹⁵⁸ F/S, p. 247.

¹⁵⁹ Because they send an information that is, at the same time, reassuring and never seen before. F/S, p. 248.

basic questions - who? what? when? where? - that frame and depict the situations of the world through which the vestimentary code is veiled. Active, festive situations, days where 'nothing is planned', sport, travel and seasons are all the 'where and when' of the world of fashion that, by transforming uses into rituals, builds up its dreamlike microcosm. Answering the question 'who?' entails, on the other hand, the consideration of the realm of what Barthes calls 'being': in this field the world of fashion is constituted by all the signified gleaned from anthropological models of which the connotation gives its rhetorical version. The realm of work, the psychological prototypes that Barthes calls 'essences', sex and body, are all sites upon which fashion can construct its narrative. In dealing with 'work', the rhetoric of fashion operates to signify the job as an identity rather than reality: for instance the secretary is never described in terms of her work and duties (this would be the level of denotation) rather for what she would like to be: she desires to be always perfect by working for her boss. Psychological essences do the same and they are extremely important in order to understand how woman is signified by the rhetoric of fashion. The woman depicted in the fashion spreads wants to be what the reader is and what the reader desires to be. The rhetorical narrative of fashion achieves this paradox by condensing a woman's personality into single adjectives that absorb completely the entire person's essence.¹⁶⁰ The narratives that construct the world of fashion in magazines come to be a kind of 'handbook' of models through which femininity - closely tied to women - is deeply charged and connoted. According to Barthes, the ambivalent dream of identity and of otherness entails a characterisation of woman that relies heavily on the accumulation of elements, if not their opposition,¹⁶¹ multiplying the person without any risk of losing her personality. In the study of the world of fashion in Manzini's articles, I aim to trace the features and types related to the female world. I will investigate how the magazine's phraseology would create and enhance these types of women.

3.2 William Reddy and Trip Glazer: Between Emotions and Emotional Expressions

The study of emotions in this research will aim to understand how a feeling is translated into written expressions in literature. Understanding emotions in written discourse can be an original tool to examine simultaneously the reflection and the fabrication of both imagery and models, constructed 'around' and 'for' the presumed female readership.

¹⁶⁰ F/S, p. 254.

¹⁶¹ F/S, p. 255.

Defining emotions can be difficult: it involves considerations of both biological and anthropological factors - or at least their interplay. Admittedly human emotions are deeply embedded within our subjectivity and intimate world, making their study highly insidious and questionable. Emotions are fleeting, irrational – according to Western tradition¹⁶² - and it is still uncertain whether human beings share a set of basic universal emotions or if their feelings are produced and shaped by ‘culture’. Dealing with the rich literature on emotions, the current studies reveal how this new field of research draws on a range of disciplines - namely psychology, anthropology, philosophy, history, and sociology - forming the battleground for several theories that try to overcome issues of time, space and culture in the experience and formulation of human emotions.

Trip Glazer has noted how it is impossible to give a uniform definition of emotion. Furthermore, he claims that his definition and analysis of emotional expressions is independent from the definition of what emotions are. While Glazer is aware of the thorny debate about the interpretation of the concept of emotions, he states that this will not be the necessary precondition to understand his theory of emotional expressions.¹⁶³ In contrast with the concept of emotion, emotional expressions leave the room for the insincere expression of an emotion.

This is extremely important since we deal with fashion writings that go back to a century ago and because fashion journalism aims to sell desires rather than goods, that encourage the purchase of certain items. This may allow for an artificial and ‘insincere’ reproduction of certain feelings. For this reason, adopting the concept of emotional expression rather than that of emotions allows us to leave room for the simulation of certain emotions in writings by the author.

But what exactly is an ‘emotional expression’ and what does it entail? How can the concept of expression be more functional, precise and less deceptive than that of emotion? By investigating the way emotions can be expressed in writing, Glazer makes a cogent point, discussing the conditions under which a speech act is worthy of being called ‘expression’. According to him, emotional expressions in writing are speech acts insofar as they evoke an emotion in the readership and they signify the emotion that the author ‘purportedly feels at the time of expression’.¹⁶⁴ In this sense, he does not circumscribe ‘expressions’ as the

¹⁶² Reddy notes that this comes from the Cartesian dualism that distinguished between mind and body. Reddy, William, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 15, 66.

¹⁶³ Glazer, Trip, ‘On the Virtual Expression of Emotion in Writing’, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 57 (2017), 177-194, (p. 179).

¹⁶⁴ Glazer, p. 181.

overarching concept that generally describes the emotionality in writing. Rather, expressions should be understood as the tool employed by authors to enable their readers to *imagine* the perception of emotionally expressive behaviours - or the perception of a specific emotion. Glazer's analysis is conducted upon literary texts - poetry and novels - and I deem this investigation useful since we are going to explore fashion articles by Manzini. This production bears important similarities with the narrative and poetic dimension of her literary activity. Emotional expressions are thus written emotions whose aim is to enable the reader to vividly imagine and feel. This, in Glazer's view, is possible only if the author creates a 'virtual presence' in the text by substituting the facial expressions, gestures, and tones that we commonly use in everyday life to express our emotions, with lexical devices and 'suitable context'.¹⁶⁵

According to Glazer the 'suitable context' is important because 'a reader ought to approach the text on the assumption that the author (or the character) may be attempting to express himself, thereby making it appropriate for the reader to imaginatively engage the text.'¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, stylistic devices - lexicon, diction, syntax, personifications and punctuation marks - and suitable context conveniently organised, would evoke in the mind of the reader a specific image in a detailed way.

Glazer's argument appears more interesting and better suited to the analysis of Manzini's articles once we reframe the concept of speech acts in the light of Austin's theory, according to which in our language there are both statements that 'describe' the world but also claims that 'do' something to the world.¹⁶⁷ Austin called the latter category 'performative' in contrast to descriptive statements. This is an interesting concept because when the speech act expresses an emotion, it assumes the double function that is usually ascribed to the *performative*: in fact, it describes and crystallises on the page the specific feeling, but it also does something to people who read it: this produces in turn, new emotions. The above concept was re-elaborated by William Reddy in *The Navigation of Feelings*. He has called these performative statements *emotives*, giving them the double power to describe the world and actively intervene upon reality. Verbal expression of emotions would continue to elicit a feeling and a sensation, remaining active and arousing something in the reader. In this way, emotional expression in Manzini's fashion articles will be explored according to this double function: that of describing fashion and 'doing' something to the world whenever the fashion item is showcased.

¹⁶⁵ Glazer, p. 186.

¹⁶⁶ Glazer, p. 186.

¹⁶⁷ Austin, John L. and others, *How to do Things with Words*, 2nd edn, rev. by J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

Framing emotions in these semiological coordinates, the analysis of the next chapter outlines what types of emotional expressions can be found in Manzini's fashion articles, providing the case study for the investigation of mechanisms of production and consumption of emotions in fashion. Furthermore, the attention to the written word is aligned with the logocentrism that scholarship traditionally ascribed to Barthes: as outlined above, he shows a distinct predilection for the written clothing that is closer and more suited to practices of connotation.

3.3 Implied author and implied reader

The concept of emotional expressions singles out the role that the author and the reader have in creating and receiving these emotions. It has been noted that the mechanisms of both production and reception of texts are influenced by how the author and the reader imagine each other respectively. For these reasons, this research is grounded in two important notions of literary criticism: the 'implied author' and 'the implied reader', elaborated by Wayne C. Booth and Wolfgang Iser respectively. According to Booth, each text has a real author and virtual one. The virtual or implied author is the one who 'choose consciously or unconsciously what we read'. Since the recipients of one text will always assume the existence of an author behind what they are reading, they always imagine him, according to what they read, as a virtual entity with a set of beliefs, skills, qualities. The author is implied but present and she is ideal because her value is established by what can be read in the text rather than what the author does in her real life. In this perspective Manzini, in writing her fashion articles, constructs an implied author that is detached from her real personality but is equally perceived by her readers. This is further complicated using the two pseudonyms - *Vanessa* and *Pamela* - that Manzini employs in her fashion journalistic production. Her readers know that behind these two names is hidden Manzini, as some interviews to Manzini confirm. However, the voice that she uses, all the devices employed to convey certain feelings, sensations and concepts, are ascribed not to Manzini as persona but as *Pamela* or *Vanessa* as author. On the same route, Manzini herself, in the shoes of the implied author, must assume the presence of an 'implied reader'. This means that when Manzini wrote her fashion articles, she composed them having in mind an ideal reader that may – or may not – correspond to the real readership of her articles.

As a matter of fact, according to Wolfgang Iser, 'an implied reader is a hypothetical figure who is likely to get most of what the author intended'. Manzini creates her rhetoric of fashion, both at the level of the signifier and the signified, imagining what the feelings and

everyday situation the women who read her article may experience. She may have in mind what the reader would appreciate in her writings. Both the notions of the implied author and reader show how the text is a process of construction whose meaning is realised through the act of reading and how the reader approaches the texts according to his or her experience and also to the idea that he or she has of the implied author.¹⁶⁸ According to Iser, the text can be regarded as a point of convergence between the artistic process enacted by the author and the aesthetic one realised by the reader who approaches the text.

¹⁶⁸ Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

Chapter IV

Emotions in Gianna Manzini's Fashion Articles: The Analysis

This chapter illustrates how emotions work in Manzini's fashion writings. More precisely, by drawing on Glazer's studies on the written expression of emotions, it will be shown how the implied author of articles – that is Manzini under the two pseudonyms of *Vanessa* and *Pamela* - uses emotions to deal with fashion in relation to her implied reader. Along with the definition of both the author and the readership, this relationship will be investigated by looking closely at how *Vanessa* or *Pamela* let emotions emerge in the articles' written expressivity. In this sense, building on the semiological approach to fashion writings made by Barthes, Manzini's writings will be analysed at the level of the signifier and of the signified in order to examine what are the characteristics that make both the form and the content of her articles emotional.

The analysis will be conducted on a selected corpus of articles that have never been analysed before. Specifically, this research focuses on journalistic writings created for the weekly magazine *Oggi* and that were published from 1938 to 1942 in a specific column 'La Vetrina delle Donne'. These articles are all signed with the pseudonym *Pamela* that Manzini employed only for the magazine *Oggi*. Sometimes, press clippings from *Oggi* show how Manzini struck-out the name *Pamela* and put *Vanessa*. However, the reverse does not happen because articles published on other magazines - like *La Fiera Letteraria* - are always signed by *Vanessa* and never by *Pamela*.

However, this does not affect the research. The choice to focus on articles from *Oggi* is not related to the nature of the pseudonym. Rather, I choose to examine these writings because they were published regularly from 1938 to 1942 and they have been only partly analysed or subjected to academic attention. Furthermore, they cover an important historical period, which is the dawning of fascism and the beginning of the Second World War. Although historical events are not explicitly mentioned, these writings deserve attention because they chronicle fashion in an important moment of its development and affirmation.

These articles show a specific layout. Between 1938 and 1942 *Oggi* had the broadsheet format and it was similar, in its appearance, to a newspaper. The articles of Manzini/*Pamela* on the column 'La Vetrina delle Donne' appears in two or more vertical columns. The main text is divided into a set of sections, each one introduced with a short subtitle. This allows for articles that are quite heterogenous in their content: generally, Manzini introduces a collection, then she focuses on details or she makes a cultural or historical digression about

a particular dress/accessory or trend. However, there are articles that show some distinctive traits since they do not deal with fashion specifically. Rather, they are constructed like short stories where female characters, their behaviour, and experience of fashion are put in the foreground. Fashion is filtered through the experience of the characters of the articles and, as it will be shown later, it becomes the objective correlative of specific feelings. This throws the production of Manzini as fashion journalist into a literary sphere, making these articles completely different from the traditional fashion journalistic production of the time. The presence of the characters, to which Manzini attributes everyday experiences of fashion, along with cultural references makes this production worthy to be explored.

The first section of the chapter looks at the *rhetoric of the signifier*, providing an analysis of the stylistic devices employed by the author in fashion articles. The aim is to show how figures of speech and rhetorical devices enhance the emotional power of the articles. The second section of the chapter scrutinises the content of Manzini's articles, going deeply into the author/reader relationship. What will be analysed are the themes in which Manzini set her fashion narrative, who are the characters of her articles and how they relate to the *world of fashion*. This can inform us about what feelings are attributed to them and to what extent emotions are employed in fashion writings to appeal to the reader.

4.1 The rhetoric of signifier: the emotional power of stylistic devices

The rhetorical system, as conceived by Barthes, has one rhetorical signifier that he calls the *writing of fashion*: it sustains syntactically, through a set of stylistic phenomena and composition, the rhetorical signified. The rhetorical signifier can be thus understood as the overall set of stylistic devices able to support linguistically the perception that the author conveys in emotional expressions in fashion articles. The signifier is not only a mere means to convey models and emotional experiences. Rather, through rhetorical figures, it could be sufficient to evoke an emotion. In other words, the signifier, with its stylistic structures, could have by itself the power to actively elicit an emotion. The following example from Paul Jobling can explain this mechanism: 'Love is a merry-go-round... and women make it go-round... fashion is a merry-go-round ... and dresses make it go-round'. The paratactical structure of the period, the parallelism joined with the anaphor of the phrasal verb 'go round', the chiasmus 'merry-go-round/go-round // go-round/ merry-go-round', and lastly the metaphor that matches the condition of being in love to that of being fashionable, create a net of rhetorical figures that support the message, the mood and the images - that constitute

the signified - that the author communicates in relation to a specific fashion collection.¹⁶⁹ These rhetorical devices support the signified, and because they cooperate to uplift the discourse on a garment from a level of pure description to that of connotation, they are invested by a poetic aura that Barthes calls the *Poetic of Fashion*. Our aim, here, is to identify what kind of signifiers of connotation - rhetorical signifiers - can be found in Manzini's fashion articles, how they work in her fashion writings, and what purpose they serve. In this task, we are facilitated by two basic facts.

The first one is that her articles, as pointed out earlier, are most of the time, devoid of images and illustrations, allowing Manzini to emphasise and empower the written word. However, this empowerment happens also when her articles are accompanied by images. Manzini does not describe what the reader sees in images in a servile way but rather her prose is densely connotative, and it provides additional details that are not disclosed by the images. An example is an article from *Panorama* signed by *Vanessa* without any indication about the date of publication¹⁷⁰ in which Manzini describes the creations of two fashion designers, the Botti sisters. The image, as the brief caption under the photo shows, illustrates two organza gowns, one white and the other red. The first one is decorated with a bunch of flowers, while the second one presents little violets sewn on to the white lace. Manzini completely recreated the description of these two dresses, saying: 'Vien fatto di pensare a una festa nel giardino del re, magari il giardino di Boboli; [...] compete con questo, per la soavità dei colori e la leggerezza smussante della stoffa, un altro modello che alterna, in pannelli disposti verticalmente, merletto bianco, e velo stampato e tenui violette di campo su un fondo perla.'¹⁷¹ Manzini transfigures poetically the real garments displayed but she also adds other important information and details to the description, such as the vertical panels that cannot be immediately grasped by looking at the photo. This supports Barthes predilection for written clothing that fixes the perception given by images, adds emphasis to specific elements and gives additional information about the photograph, that, in Barthes' view, is a mere slice of reality.¹⁷²

Secondly, Manzini's career as a novelist is the other reason that allows us to investigate the signifier of her fashion articles better. The analysis of an original corpus of fashion writing will be supported in this research by the critical studies on her fictional style and prose. At the same time, the examination of the fashion articles not republished in collections can shed

¹⁶⁹ Jobling, Paul, *Fashion Spreads. Word and Image in Fashion Photography since 1980*, (Berg: Oxford, 1999), p. 77.

¹⁷⁰ Manzini, Gianna (Vanessa), 'Possibilità liriche dei vestiti', in *Panorama*, (no date) pp.537-9 Archivio del 900' Faldone 12, folder 'Panorama'

¹⁷¹ Manzini, Gianna, 'Possibilità liriche dei vestiti', in *Panorama*.

¹⁷² F/S, pp. 13-6.

new light over pre-existing interpretations of her literary works. The following analysis is thus an exhaustive survey of the rhetorical devices that serve as the ‘scaffolding’ upon which the author Manzini grafts the images, moods, and emotions related to fashion objects, settings, women, and femininity in twentieth century Italy.

Rhetorical figures of speech assume an important role in Manzini’s fashion writings because they sustain the signification and they also contribute to intensifying the perception that the author apparently aims to convey in the text. The examination of the overall corpus of selected items has revealed the use of two types of rhetorical devices: the syntactical figures, which strictly deal with the order of the words in the sentence - including also the phonetic assonance between the syllables of one or more words - and the semantic figures, concerned with the transfer of meaning to an object or situation.¹⁷³

Syntactical figures in Manzini’s fashion articles include punctuation, accumulations, enumeration, parallelism, anaphor, the asymmetry and/or the symmetry of the overall period, the lexicon - the names, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs. Syntactical figures also include the chiasmus and the hyperbaton which deal with the way terms are organized in the sentence. The nominal sentence will be also included in this section.

On the other hand, semantic figures consist of the objective correlative, similes, metaphors, personifications, synesthesia, and subjectivism. The colour notations, which show a blend between syntactical and semantic properties, will be included in a separate section: they present a special mixture of metaphors, personifications, and synesthesia but they are also deeply affected by syntactical phenomena especially in the choice of words and in the inversions between the noun and the adjective. Colours in Manzini’s fashion articles deserve special attention because they play an important role in sustaining the signified of fashion. In fact, as it will be shown below, they support the rhetorical signified that is ‘latent’ and ‘nebulous’.

In terms of syntactical devices, the construction of the *Poetics of fashion* can be conceived as a system similar to ‘Chinese boxes’: the syntactical devices are the support of the semantic devices, that in turn, back up the *World of fashion* as theorised by Barthes.

As we have seen from the theoretical framework, the use of rhetorical devices can contribute to move the description from a level of denotation to a pure poetic dimension. This poetics not only sustains a more complex emotional discourse but is, additionally, ‘emotional’ in itself.

To understand how this mechanism works, the analysis of syntactical devices requires starting from the smallest unit of the period: the punctuation. Literary criticism on Manzini

¹⁷³ Garavelli Mortara, B., *Manuale Di Retorica*, (Milano: Bompiani, 2012), p. 142.

has not overlooked the usage that she made of commas, interjections, parenthesis, question marks and exclamations that are all employed to serve reasons linked to grammar and hierarchy of periods but also to achieve a certain degree of poetry. In the same way, this is also evident in her fashion articles where the use of commas serves a specific set of purposes. The literary critic Carlo Bo has emphasized the role of commas in Manzini's novels. In his view, Manzini 'sa piegare la pagina ai propri voleri' and 'soffoca ogni moto nel segno della virgola' and, he says, commas are more important than full stops because they allow Manzini to create a controlled prose where it is possible to find 'lo scarto del pensiero' and also 'il lavoro della sua intelligenza'.¹⁷⁴

Something similar happens with the use of parentheses. As De Robertis points out in 'L'arte della Manzini' - that constitutes the preface to his edition to Manzini's *Venti racconti* - parentheses indicate the stratification of her narrative. They allow Manzini to translate stylistically the 'insistenza nel rievocare' that becomes 'un modo di raccapezzarsi e risalire nel tempo'.¹⁷⁵ Parentheses are used as a temporal tool to invoke and re-invoke a memory. They halt the flow of the narration and act as the place where additional material can be recovered from the author's experience and grafted on the course of the novel. In this way, Manzini expands and deepens the potential of her narrative. Clelia Martignoni compares Manzini's use of parentheses to 'digressions', showing how these gave to the reader 'una verità spesso più intensa di quella affidata all'asse centrale della frase o del racconto'.¹⁷⁶

However, Manzini's fashion articles are not characterized by the same level of inwardness and autobiography of her novels. For this reason, punctuation and parentheses in fashion publications can also serve purposes different from those performed in her novels. In fact, they can have a triple function: firstly, to order and clarify; secondly to draw the reader's attention to an isolated syntagma and to impose a rhythm and musicality in the passage; thirdly, to make room for the author's intervention, creating a kind of conversational tone with her readers.

First of all, punctuation is employed to put order in the chaos provoked by the emotion elicited by a succession of fashion objects and that she wants the readers to visualise. The use of commas - which includes also the use of the colon and semicolon - is functional to the syntactical figure of accumulation that is a form of enumeration divided by

¹⁷⁴ Bo, Carlo, 'Note sull'arte di Gianna Manzini', in *Convivium*, 1 (1938), 31-8, (p. 35).

¹⁷⁵ De Robertis, Giuseppe, 'L'arte della Manzini' in Manzini, G. and De Robertis, G., *Venti Racconti* (Milano: Mondadori, 1941) quoted in Luti, Giorgio, 'Scrittura e tempo narrativo nei Racconti di Gianna Manzini', in *Gianna Manzini tra letteratura e vita, Atti del Convegno, Pistoia - Firenze 27-28-29 maggio 1983*, ed. by M. Forti (Milano: Fondazione Alberto e Arnoldo Mondadori, 1985) pp. 93-107, (p. 100).

¹⁷⁶ Martignoni, Clelia, 'Per Forte come un leone', in *Gianna Manzini tra letteratura e vita*, ed. by M. Forti (Milano: Fondazione Alberto e Arnoldo Mondadori, 1985), pp. 113-130, (p. 116).

punctuation.¹⁷⁷ Commas, colons, and semicolons can order the apparently disorganised succession of items that the author sees and wants to report. They both suggest an accumulation but also the attempt to order and clarify the chaotic succession produced by the sight. This happens because our sight can grasp many items all at once, while writing must put the visual element into an ordered succession. As a consequence, in putting order, the use of punctuation allows Manzini to better convey the impressions and feelings elicited by the sight of fashion objects.

This is further corroborated by Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo who, in his studies on art criticism and *ekphrasis*, has linked the use of punctuation with the rhetorical figure of subjectivism. According to him exclamative and interrogative sentences, along with punctuation marks, can express a range of subjective states of mind, like admiration and surprise, that contribute to express a further emotive surge. In addition, he conceives of subjectivism as the dispersion produced in the subject once she or he is struggling with the plurality of details of an object.¹⁷⁸

In this sense, punctuation marks can express a range of subjective states of mind and an important tool in ordering the translation of the visual element into the verbal one as the following example show: ‘Un mazzo di violette è bastato oggi, per me, a dare il tracollo all’inverno. [...] Freschissimi, fragranti, erano già vecchi, relegati in un’aria d’altra stagione: facevano tutt’uno col velluto, la pelliccia, il salotto tiepido, il manicotto.’¹⁷⁹ In this extract, the violets signify the end of winter. Spring is coming and the flowers are put away along with other objective correlatives of the winter: the velvet, the fur, the tepid living room, the sleeves. Different objects are pulled together and connected by commas to reproduce the chaotic accumulations of elements grasped by the vision. The use of punctuation divides and semantically distances different things inside the sentence: adjectives - sometimes in their superlative form ‘freschissimi’ - from parenthetical sentences ‘erano già vecchi, relegati in un’altra stagione.’ Since the article has no images, the use of punctuation allows the reader to visualise the garment even without photos. In this sense, commas put order into the totality of details that a fashion item possesses, producing a writing that enables the reader to ‘see’ and vividly experience what is described. But they also succeed in recreating the accumulation of details given by sight.

The above extract reveals in advance the third purpose of punctuation: that of isolating the author’s thoughts and considerations from the descriptive flow of the fashion items

¹⁷⁷ The accumulation is a form of enumeration conducted by the juxtaposition of elements that, rather than being separated by conjunctions (polysyndeton), are divided by punctuation (asyndeton).

¹⁷⁸ Mengaldo, Pier Vincenzo, *Tra due linguaggi, arti figurative e critica*, (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2005), pp. 31-5.

¹⁷⁹ 3/39 F. M.

showcased in the article. In this sense, Manzini brought into her fashion activity some traits that belong to the stream of consciousness like the insertion of impressions and personal thought inside the flow of narration, as in the following example:¹⁸⁰ ‘Quei fiori malinconici hanno accennato una ruga, anzi una cicatrice dell’anno.’ The word ‘anzi’ marks a sudden correction of what flowers would suggest. In this sense, it seems that Manzini was conveying the sensations that came to mind as she describes the melancholic flowers, showing the development that these associations entail in her mind.

The second function ascribed to punctuation in fashion articles is evident in relation to verbs and adjectives, intending to draw the reader’s attention to an isolated syntagma, giving also rhythm and musicality to the passage. This tendency can be compared to the didactic function that Barthes ascribes to written clothing in relation to photograph. By using commas and semicolons, Manzini emphasizes one specific quality of a given object of fashion. Sometimes, comma divides two adjectives that can have a similar meaning. The punctuation separates two terms where the second has the function to intensify the meaning of the previous one. As it happens in the following examples, ‘[la futura sposa] è una donna dolce, tutta colori intonati fra l’avorio e un biondo calmo, riposato: e le sta bene, un poco contrastandola, quel tono di protesta’, the adjectives ‘calmo’ and ‘riposato’ have a similar meaning and they are both referred to the adjective ‘biondo’. The comma puts a pause, isolates them and they are both emphasized and mutually reinforced. Probably, the conjunction ‘e’ instead of the comma would have not produced the same effect. A similar thing happens with ‘difficile’ and ‘esigente’ in this sentence ‘Avremo del giallo [...]. È un colore difficile, esigente: sottolinea tutte le pelli, rileva le pettinature, contorna, espone.’ The orchestration of elements, conducted throughout the syntactical device of punctuation, shows how this rhetorical device converges toward the musical enhancement of the period creating a rhythm that ultimately conveys a mood, evoking and empowering the perceptual experience of what the author purportedly feels about these fashion items.¹⁸¹ Isolation and emphasis will also be discussed in the examination of the way that Manzini describes colours in order to highlight the connotation of a specific colour notation.

Parentheses, question and exclamation marks - and often their blending - play another important role in laying down the rhetorical signifier of emotional expressions. Manzini adds exclamations parenthetically to pull her writing close to a more lively discourse, as she would give the impression of conducting an informal conversation with her readers: ‘Nemmeno oggi, ai nostri calzoncini da spiaggia, da montagna, da bicicletta, da giardino e

¹⁸⁰ On the relationship between the comma and the stream of consciousness see Garavelli, pp. 218-9.

¹⁸¹ Luti, pp. 99-100.

adesso, ahimè! da città, tutti gli uomini la mandano buona.’¹⁸² This tells us about the way Manzini conceived her position in relation to her imagined reader. The prescriptive nature of fashion requires her to be didactic but the insertion of *ahimè!* let us consider that Manzini behaved toward her readership in a more friendly attitude. The adoption of questions - sometimes rhetorical ones – serves the same purpose. They help to mimic and enact a conversation that would normally happen orally adding colour to the discourse, contributing to moving further the speech/writing to an informal tone.¹⁸³

Manzini imagines what the ideal reader of her articles could question about the clothing she is talking about. This is confirmed by the fact that she immediately provides an answer to the question that she poses, sometimes in a reassuring tone:¹⁸⁴ ‘Questa signora, chi non lo vede? è nativamente elegante.’¹⁸⁵ In another example, she remarks: Siete rimaste male? V’è sembrato che avessero umiliato, con queste spiegazioni, l’estro, la fantasia, la sorpresa, l’individualità, l’arbitrio? Non ne dubito.’¹⁸⁶ Sometimes it happens that the use of questions or exclamation marks is combined with the use of parentheses contributing to a heavy agglomeration of impressions and thoughts of the author, as in the following example: ‘Piccoli problemi: cucitura dietro o davanti? (Dietro, senza esitare). Rinforzo tagliato in linea orizzontale o a punta? (Per le gambe sottili diritto, per quelle con la caviglia forte, a punta).’¹⁸⁷

Furthermore, it is important to note how this use has an informative purpose, aiming to expand a concept or the understanding of the image. In the following example Manzini uses parentheses to expand the quantity of details that she wants to report: ‘fra la tavola (bucce di frutta, palline di mollica, toscanissimi fiaschi, negligenza cenciosa di tovaglioli strapazzati, briciole di pane) e i visi dei commensali, solleciti fabbricanti di buon umore, c’era un accordo commovente.’¹⁸⁸ The parentheses open a channel of participation, allowing Manzini to intervene in the flow of description: ‘La piuma di struzzo dopo aver festeggiato i cappellini della scorsa primavera (le signore, incredibile ma vero, l’hanno osteggiata e, una volta tanto, non si sono trovate d’accordo con la modista) si presenta tessuta in forma di minuscoli cappelli (veri miracoli di leggerezza e leggiadria).’¹⁸⁹

Phenomena of punctuation and accumulation can be also found along with other syntactical devices, namely anaphors, repetitions and parallelism. For instance, when accumulation

¹⁸² 3/67 F. M.

¹⁸³ F/S, p. 229.

¹⁸⁴ Sometimes, rhetorical questions serve the purpose to reinforce a thesis: *Ma come dubitarne?* In 3/37 F. M.

¹⁸⁵ 3/19 F. M.

¹⁸⁶ 3 /22 F. M.

¹⁸⁷ 3/30 F. M.

¹⁸⁸ 3/17 F. M.

¹⁸⁹ 3/19 F. M.

occurs in fashion articles, it happens that one word or sentence is repeated twice. This produces the rhetorical figure of parallelism. In other cases, when the word that is repeated is placed at the beginning of the sentence, it creates the rhetorical device of the anaphor. Both parallelism and anaphor create mechanisms of symmetry or asymmetry between words and sentences able to convey a particular mood. In the phrase: '[...] c'è troppo capriccio, troppo gusto, troppo sapore, troppo gioco di prospettive, [...]'¹⁹⁰ the author is describing the impression that visiting a bizarre 'museum of stocking' has given to her. The anaphor 'troppo' serves to stress the sense of redundancy that the author has gained from the exhibition. Elsewhere, the repetition of words produces a mix between anaphor and parallelism as it happens, in the following example, for the adjective 'romantico' and its superlative: 'Tutta la collezione spirava un rinnovato gusto romantico. Romanticissimo: questo grande avventuriero che volta le spalle alla realtà e cavalca questo miraggio [...] Romantico: romanticissimo: non resta che insistere in un pallore trasparente a base di cipria viola e mangiare con grazia un'insalata di petali rosa.'¹⁹¹ This calculated repetition at the end and the beginning of the sentence, that is repeated also in the second part of the passage, allows the author to imbue the passage with a romantic mood, giving a particular slant to the article. This finds resonance with Barthes conception of the parataxis that extends the power of rhetorical devices to the overall period, developing what is called 'atmosphere' from discontinuous situations and objects.¹⁹²

Lexical resources are central in the rhetoric of the signifier: what is at stake in this syntactical analysis is the way Manzini combines verbs with adjectives, nouns, and adverbs, in a way that can be defined poetic. Defying the general rules of the sentence structure, she puts the noun between two adjectives: 'fluido motivo ondoso',¹⁹³ or she places the predicate after the adjective as in 'attente al sellino, soffice vuol essere.'¹⁹⁴ The following example shows Manzini's propensity toward the rhetorical figure of the hyperbaton. In a manuscript article found in the archives, the sentence 'evocano la camelia dei colli più nitidi' has been corrected and rewritten in a more complex construction 'evocano dei colli più nitidi la camelia'.¹⁹⁵ This correction suggests how Manzini preferred a more poetic use of prose. In fact, through the rhetorical device of hyperbaton, the sentence comes to have an evocative aim.

¹⁹⁰ 3/29 F. M.

¹⁹¹ 2/368 F. M.

¹⁹² F/S, p. 247.

¹⁹³ Manzini, Gianna, *La moda di Vanessa*, ed. by N. Campanella, (Sellerio: Palermo, 2003), p. 353.

¹⁹⁴ 3/33 F. M.

¹⁹⁵ This sentence was found in a manuscript article 1/44 Fascicolo 1/A Cart 4 - Carte 1-14, 1/45. However, it has not been possible to find the published version of the article to verify which version appeared in print.

Sometimes the alternation between verbs and adjectives produces a full-fledged chiasmus that is constructed in a way that the adjective is placed both at the beginning and at the end of the sentence, and the verb is situated in the middle. This also produces phenomena of symmetry. See for example, the following:

*Difficile ammetterlo, quest'odio. **Penoso**, subirlo. Rispettarlo, **miracoloso**.*¹⁹⁶

*E poi: lane brillanti come **sete**; **sete** opache come lane.*¹⁹⁷

This is what Barthes has theorised as 'rhyme play' between sentences, producing 'expressive varieties of parataxis with inordinate succession of verbs and semantic units.'¹⁹⁸

In the case of adjectives, Manzini prefers pairs of them, often the conjunction of adjective and a superlative like 'lenti o lentissimi' or 'larghi e larghissimi', or pairs of complimentary verbs like *lo 'alleggerisce e rallegra'*.¹⁹⁹ The juxtapositions of cultivated words like 'smagare', 'alluciolato' and 'bulinatura' are also popular, and they show the attempt to create a writing that can reproduce with extreme and sophisticated precision the image and the feeling caused by the object of fashion.²⁰⁰ Sometimes adjectives are coined on purpose like 'piegoso',²⁰¹ a word that cannot be found in an Italian dictionary but that, drawn from the noun 'pieghe', reproduces exactly the feeling of softness typical of a fabric that gently falls in many folds. Another important syntactical figure that it is possible to find in the rhetoric of signifier is the nominal clause, a sentence devoid of the explicit predicate, that is often implied. This creates emphasis on the nominal elements of the sentence like nouns, adjectives, and participial adjectives, with the aim to confer a movement inside the sentence, giving prominence to the qualities of specific items.²⁰² In the phrase 'Impennata energia in gonna a pieghe e maglia a figaretto',²⁰³ the nominal sentence emphasizes the information that the author would convey about the energy that belongs to the pleated skirt. An illustrative example can be taken from Manzini's narrative and can further display how the nominal sentence works: 'tutta palmo dichiarato le mani'. This sentence, as Gianfranco Contini has noted, reaches impressionistic ends and can be read along with the anthropomorphic animation of objects that, as we have already highlighted in chapter two, is another interesting quality of Manzini's literature.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁶ Manzini, Gianna, *Scacciata dal paradiso*, ed. by S. Sivieri, and B. Garavelli, (Matelica: Hacca, 2012), p. 127, [my emphasis].

¹⁹⁷ Manzini and Campanella, p. 241, [my emphasis].

¹⁹⁸ F/S, p. 229.

¹⁹⁹ 3/19 F. M.; 3/37 F. M.

²⁰⁰ 3/78 F. M.

²⁰¹ 3/111 F. M.

²⁰² Herczeg, Gyula, 'Stile nominale nella prosa italiana contemporanea', *Acta Linguistica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 4 (1954) 171-192.

²⁰³ 3/112 F. M.

²⁰⁴ See Contini quoted in Luti, pp. 99-100.

In the use of semantic devices, Manzini pushes further the rhetoric of fashion writing into the poetic sphere. When matter - in this case, the objects of fashion understood as dresses or accessories in vogue in that period - encounters language in the practice of description, its qualities may be linked with a second meaning. According to Barthes, this shift - from a level of denotation to that of connotation - allows poetics comes to life.²⁰⁵

The semantic devices employed by Manzini include metaphors, personifications, synesthesia, subjectivism, and the objective correlative. This carries also an original employment of colour that is connoted in synesthetic and metaphorical way reaching very original results. All these figures, that are labeled for the economy of this analysis as 'semantic' - being thus differentiated from the syntactical devices - can be also called 'tropes' because they literally 'move' the expression from its original content to another significance that has a marked figurative sense. The term trope comes from the ancient Greek 'trepo' that means 'to transfer' and in rhetoric it involves a 'movement' of meaning.²⁰⁶

Semantic and syntactical devices are important to understand Manzini's *world of fashion*. The syntactical ones have an 'intensive' emotional power since they lie between their function of signifiers - and thus supporters of the signification - and their main task of 'intensifiers' of the perception, specific mood or emotion. On the other hand, semantic devices possess an 'extensive' function because they transfer meanings from one concept to another. Inside the *world of fashion*, semantic figures call into action settings, atmospheres, events that hold an affinity with the real world and can signify the specific emotion that is produced in fashion.²⁰⁷

In this perspective, the tropes found in fashion utterances and periods carry out an active role in moving the fashion discourse from a level of transitivity to that of intransitivity and, in this sense, they are the most explicit tools in investing with evocative and emotional power certain fashion items. It will be shown how this figurative shift made through tropes, enables the creation of a reservoir of images that, in turn, constitutes a world, namely the Barthes' *World of Fashion* endowed with a specific repertoire of models, situations, and places that will be analysed below in this discussion. The repertoire might slightly differ from one journalist to another creating an interesting ground for future analysis of how images and emotions can be employed in many different ways.

All these elements show the originality of Manzini's fashion prose which is evident once Barthes' theories are applied to the study her articles. In the sources considered, there is a

²⁰⁵ F/S, pp. 235-6.

²⁰⁶ Garavelli Mortara, p. 143.

²⁰⁷ As Barthes claims in his definition of the *World of Fashion*, the metaphor, along with the parataxis, helps to construct a genuine vision of the world, acting as the extension of a mood or situation. F/S, pp. 246-7.

distinctive usage of semantic figures. This challenges Barthes' reflection made on the *Poetics of Fashion* - the rhetoric of the signifier - that is presumed to be rare and poor for two basic reasons. Firstly, because according to Barthes, the garment retains always a denotative constraint - requiring thus to be described according to a simple nomenclature. Secondly, because whenever a rhetoric of clothing occurs it borrows trivial and worn out stereotypes like 'petticoats-creamy and dreamy' or predicted comparisons like 'a belt as thin as a line.'²⁰⁸ However, the detailed analysis of the tropes employed in the corpus of both *Pamela* and *Vanessa*, reveals, instead, that Manzini was able to find original rhetorical signifiers - blending them all together in a refined way - that are all suitable to create secondary meanings and to evoke images, mood, and emotions that belong to her *World of fashion*. By the employment of these tropes, she gives a heightened connotation of all the qualities that pertain to the fashion item: matter, colour, shape, haptic qualities, and luminosity. We are going to analyse the features of these semantic devices, explaining their function in the creation of situations, setting and models that build Manzini's *World of Fashion*.

Among the semantic figures, objective correlatives hold a prominent role. These, along with metaphors, are the privileged tool to reach connotative ends and to convey emotions.

T. S. Eliot, in the essay 'Hamlet and his problems' gave a precise definition of the objective correlative, considering also its emotional implications: 'The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked'.²⁰⁹ Consider the following fashion utterance by Manzini: 'Poiché una linea fissa un significato, direi che la crinolina vuol rappresentare una solitudine inebriata e gioconda.'²¹⁰ The 'crinoline' here is taken as the objective correlative of one precise feeling that is the solitude. This feeling, in turn, is additionally connoted with the couple of adjectives: inebriated and delightful that are circularly transferred to the crinoline. Manzini, by pulling together the crinoline and the solitude, makes this ordinary item of clothing the concrete symbol of this feeling. On the literary level, the use of the objective correlative stands for the sensation that this element, that belongs to the feminine wardrobe, would purportedly have caused in Manzini as fashion journalist - and not as a person. This means that Manzini assumes a specific attitude when she writes about fashion, becoming a

²⁰⁸ F/S, pp. 236-7.

²⁰⁹ Eliot, T.S., *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1950), pp. 95-103, (p.100).

²¹⁰ 3/19 F. M.

kind of implied author who writes according to what she imagines her ideal reader would be. The reader is induced to think that *Vanessa* - or *Pamela* in other cases - would have experienced this loneliness, once she saw this garment. The reader is encouraged to sympathise with this emotional perception, and to experience, in turn, the same feeling.

The poetics of objects is deeply rooted in her literary production, reaching fascinating effects and leading critics to theorise what has been labeled as the 'mondo oggettuale' typical of her novels. Specifically, Francesca di Monte has noted how through things the author manages to describe the inwardness of her characters. Objects permit access to a double reality: that concerning the interiority of the personage - his emotions and memories - and that concerning the metaphysics.²¹¹ In this context, things are not described with rationality but they are always transfigured according to the emotional value that they have for the author or for the protagonists of her articles.²¹² Looking at her fashion production, the objective correlative allows Manzini to attribute one or more specific sensations to a precise object of fashion, in a way that it can immediately evoke the feeling that the author would convey. This technique is well suited to Manzini's writings that are more like short stories rather than traditional fashion articles. These writings show the presence of characters that are depicted and psychologically characterised with the techniques characteristic of Manzini's literary activity.

The article 'In tranvai lungomare'²¹³ is extremely relevant to understand how the object world insinuates into the fashion narrative of Manzini and how she employs some objects of fashion - in this case a pair of leather shoes - to convey the feelings of the protagonist and to describe her inwardness. The author opens the article in *medias res* by introducing the memories of the protagonist that, in the middle of the article, is said to be the chambermaid of the hotel in which the author is sojourning. The author starts to describe the state of mind of the protagonist - Manzini does not mention her name - when she remembers the day when she crossed the threshold of her new marital home. The protagonist feels so welcomed in this new dwelling that she would have stepped out of it only to do the household chores. Then the protagonist goes on in describing, with a calm and nostalgic tone, how beautiful and special was her wedding and how unlucky are those who will never enjoy this day. In saying this, the protagonist concentrates her attention on the wedding dress that, being used only the day of the marriage, symbolised the exceptionality of this event and the nostalgia felt by the protagonist in recalling it: 'non bisognerebbe neppure levarselo, il vestito da

²¹¹ Di Monte, Francesca, 'Gianna Manzini: la femminilità tra realtà e invenzione narrativa', in *Triplice Specchio: l'ago, la penna, il registro di classe. Uno sguardo sul femminile ottocento/novecentesco*, ed. by L. Fava Guzzetta and others (Pesaro: Metauro, 2006), pp.125-175, (p. 129).

²¹² Di Monte, p. 150.

²¹³ 3/35 F. M.

sposa, perchè anche quando te n'hanno ricavato un abito per le feste, una volta riposto non si rimette più. [...] Il giorno che una si sposa, sì, che è differente davvero!'. Suddenly, the narration passes from the level of the memories recalled by the protagonist to the present. The author, that recounts in first person, narrates how the protagonist, by entering in her hotel room to clean the floor, is impressed by the shoes of the author: 'Veniva all'albergo per pulire i pavimenti. Davanti alle scarpe e ai sandali si fermò: "Io, di cuoio e pelle, ne ho avuti un paio solo in vita mia. Erano di quelle alte, affiliate fino a mezza gamba. Le rinnovai la mattina che fui sposa e non le ho messe più. [...] non le guardavo mai ma sapevo che c'erano; e, quand'ero stanca a sedere su quella panca, sospirare fondo, era una consolazione, ch  anche il pensiero m'andava a riposare lontano, dov'era felice.'" Even in this case, the leather shoes trigger the memories of the protagonist. They are the objective correlative of the serenity and happiness that she links to the cheerful days of her marriage: when the protagonist feels upset, the mere thought of her bridal shoes shielded in a bench, let her feel better. In this example, we can find two basic orientations of Manzini when she deals with her female protagonists. Femininity, as Di Monte remarks, is addressed by Manzini by emphasising the domestic setting and also the objects, with a special eye for details.²¹⁴ Through things, Manzini describes the inwardness of the protagonist: the shoes and the wedding dress highlight the emotional bond that the chambermaid has toward marriage as the only source of happiness that can be only accessed via memories. In addition, as Di Monte claims, these objects can also define the maternal essence of the characters. The protagonist of the article recounts how her daughter has found her shoes and, without considering the sentimental value that they have for her mother, she has cut them with the scissors making a comfortable pair to work in the farmyard. The way the protagonist remembers this episode tells us something about her maternal attitude: she is not upset by this behaviour, but her maternal love goes beyond the sentimental value of her shoes and she is indulgent towards her daughter.

The discourse of the objective correlative is embedded in that of the similes and metaphors. These enable the transfer of a sensation on a specific object, creating the premises for the emotional connotation of the objects. 'Il vestito diventa una confessione, una dichiarazione, un romanzo'²¹⁵ in this sentence the dress becomes, in climax succession, a confession, a declaration, a novel, giving it a series of meanings and images. In this case, the dress becomes the metaphorical expression of three things, linked to each other. Also, the similes

²¹⁴ Di Monte, p. 129.

²¹⁵ Manzini and Campanella, p. 232.

are central in the narrative of fashion articles and are functional in facilitating the imagination of a certain visual component of the dresses. In another article, the beautiful colours produced by the petticoats movement are compared to a 'big light-blue balloon': 'È Natascia giovinetta, felice, innamorata [...] Girò su se stessa come una ballerina, corse, volò prillò ancora sulla punta dei piedi, finché la sottana parve un enorme pallone celeste [...].'²¹⁶ The author, by using the adjective 'spumoso', compares the light blue muslin to the sea foam. In this case the similes and metaphors help the reader 'to see' the colour and the movement of the gown that belongs to the protagonist Natascia and this, as already acknowledged above, can foster the reader's imagination. Besides, the connotation enabled by these devices is important in terms of letting the implied reader 'dream'. By charging these images with the feelings, and, by evoking other images like that of the foam or the big light blue balloon, the reader is allowed to evoke these images and he/she is brought into a different sphere.

The use of personification is another important device that permits Manzini to enact and enable the vivid perception of emotions in her writings. This trope is close to the anthropomorphic animation that is one typical trait of Manzini's novels.²¹⁷ She assigns qualities, behaviour and actions - that are ordinarily human - to inanimate objects like dresses, fabrics, colours, accessories, and related details. When she talks about the luminosity emanated by the pearls embroidered on the black gown, she softens this splendour by connoting the light with the adjective 'calm' and then making the personifications of pearls: '[...] e sono talmente spaesate che diventano commoventi.'²¹⁸ Evidently, the author brings life to a detail of fashion by giving it a human attribute, as if they are alive. The pearls have the unique characteristic to be 'moving' and by transferring these human traits to objects the author makes the room for the possibility to 'move' the reader. The same process can be found in relation to the new *tailleur* that has 'una dignità e una dolce fermezza che soltanto una grande maestria possono conferire'²¹⁹ or likewise 'un abito fluido, molle, aggraziato, senza insistenze [...] audace ma cordiale; estroso ma non sofisticato; spiccante ma affabile, guardingo ma socievole.'²²⁰ Here, Manzini, in order to describe the subtle impression that the *tailleur* suggests, turns to the personification of this object of fashion that, just like human beings, could have 'dignity' and 'gentle resoluteness.' At the same time, the dress described in the second example shows six anthropomorphic qualities, being bold but cordial, excellent but amiable, careful but sociable. These are all

²¹⁶ 3/19 F. M.

²¹⁷ This expression was coined by the literary critic Gianfranco Contini, quoted in Luti, p. 104.

²¹⁸ 3/60 F. M.

²¹⁹ Manzini and Campanella, p. 194.

²²⁰ Manzini and Campanella, pp. 243, 363, 348.

sensations that only the written clothing could explicitly evoke since it won't be sure that the reader would univocally apprehend them from an image.

4.1.1 Colours

Facevo queste considerazioni di fronte a una vestaglia di cresco georgette viola mammola con maniche cortissime costituite da ricchi anelli sovrapposti di merletto color tè. Ripresa, ammazzettata alla vita, si orna di un ciuffo di fiori che, in rosa, ciclamino, lilla, fragola, sciogliono il denso e morbido colore della stoffa.²²¹

The use that Manzini makes of coloristic notations puts together a set of rhetorical devices already explored above. However, her use of colours shows new figures like the synesthesia - which connects two words belonging to different sensorial spheres – and it is also the place where we can understand how the 'latent' and the 'nebulous' signified works.

Colours are the *milieu* of Manzini's prose and their use exemplifies her attitude to investigating the world with the eye of a painter. Fashion pushes Manzini to focus on details as herself states: 'Quando mi metto a scrivere il particolare mi assale velocemente. Mi sento come aggredita da miriadi di cose, dettagli non precedentemente predisposti. La realtà esige una mia lettura.'²²² Fashion allowed her to stress her expressive capability in producing descriptions of colours that are dense in meaning and profoundly evocative. In fact, colour is not a mere descriptive instrument. Rather it is functional to her expressionistic poetics and able to connote more than a simple description.²²³ As Finocchiaro Chimirri suggests, Manzini doesn't perceive colours as something on their own or abstract. Rather, she conceives them in relation with the world of nature and, by experiencing colour with the attitude of the poet, she sees in each chromatic hue the reflection of life.²²⁴ The way she uses colours shows her awareness of the beauty that they can evoke as if they maintain a link with life and are part of the universe. To achieve this end, personifications and metaphors are involved in the description of colours.

This chromatic representation is central for the comprehension of the overall mechanism of emotional signification. Colours are never just the simple and common red, yellow or blue or their derivative. Instead, they always evoke sensorial spheres different from sight - with

²²¹ 3/45 F. M.

²²² Panicali, Anna, 'La moda "la più calunniata di tutti i tempi"', in AA.VV., *Gianna Manzini. Una voce del modernismo europeo*, (Pesaro: Metauro, 2008), pp. 129-151, (p. 133).

²²³ Finocchiaro Chimirri, *Due solariani altrove: Gianna Manzini, Elio Vittorini*, (Catania: CUEM, 1986), quoted in Di Monte, p. 150.

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 150

the chance to enact the semantic figure of synesthesia. They also hint at cultural themes like history of art or literature.

Manzini's palette shows a wide spectrum of colours, from blended hues to colours that cannot be classified for their lack of reference to any real shade, retaining thus an extremely rarefied power of connotation.

'Verde nascente'²²⁵ shows the use of the adjectival participle to give the precise sensation of a colour that is blossoming, used to evoke a hue but also the freshness typical of sprouting plants. This impression is thus reflected upon the dress. 'Verde squillantissimo'²²⁶ uses the figure of synesthesia that associates the colour green - grasped by the sense of sight - with the superlative 'squillantissimo' - that refers to the sense of hearing - to display the brightest version of this colour. Dealing with yellows, reds and blues, Manzini is more inclined to suggest artistic and literary connotations: 'giallo veronese', 'rosso pompeiano', 'blu Chagall', 'blu Vermeer', 'blu petrolio', 'blu grigio' and lastly 'gozzaniano azzurro'. All these colours suggest a precise shade, other than being a powerful device to retrace, philologically, the creative and inspirational path that guided the author in this practice of connotation. They also show the importance of the cultural references that will be highly employed in her articles. However, other interesting examples show the power of colours in suggesting specific situations and moods. Take for instance 'il bianco è un'affascinante avventura', 'bianco cerimonia', the colour 'sabbia di Sicilia', 'rosa risveglio, molto pallido e quasi argentato':²²⁷ they all recreate, by the simple touch of colour, a visual situation, enabling the reader to see the dress described also in a specific situation like the Sicilian beach, or the sacral event of a ceremony that demands to dress in immaculate white.

Specifically, these colour notations show how the rhetorical signified is not explicitly stated but it is understood by the reader. 'Rosa risveglio' evokes delicacy and tenuity, characteristics that are latent – to use Barthes' words – but implicitly aroused in the reader. The feature of the 'latent signified' can be also linked to the nebulosity of the signified, because it cannot be predicted if every reader will link the word 'risveglio' to the colour pink and to the concepts of 'delicacy' and 'tenuity'. It may be possible that the action of 'risveglio' may be interpreted differently according to the experience and the personal background of who receives the message. In this sense, the nebulosity of the signified, understood as the chaotic nature of the signified that depends on who gets the message, along with its being 'latent', can be fully understood in Manzini's use of coloristic notations.

²²⁵ 3/47 F. M.

²²⁶ Manzini and Campanella, p. 186. See also the variant *Fuxia squillantissimi* in *ibid.* p. 309.

²²⁷ Manzini and Campanella, p. 350.

Other colour notations include references that cannot be determined because they do not retain any connection with real colours. They are, instead, the outcome of an extreme subjectivism that creates new colours on the basis of emotional connections or personal memories evoked by the item itself. Examples are ‘merletto color tempo’,²²⁸ ‘color spagnolo malato’, or ‘fra le tinte scure: africa, lichene, mirtillo, Portorico, rondine, terra di Siena, and altri sono un po’ più peculiari rosè delle moderne stanze da bagno’.²²⁹ Additionally, in the previous examples the author places the discourse on a more subtle level, by indicating geographical elements and by stimulating the imagination of the reader to figure out what real shade the colour ‘tempo’, the ‘spagnolo malato’ or ‘color Africa’ could be. Manzini would probably arouse a broad spectrum of shades in the readers’ minds, giving them the possibility to imagine, on their own, colours according to their personal experiences. In this sense, much of this procedure can be compared to the impressionist style: the adjective becomes, at the same time, the substance and the immobilisation of a fleeting impression.

The following extract is extremely significant to grasp the bizarre outcomes of the use of colours:

Gran voga ebbe a quel tempo il *color sospiro soffocato* che è un rosa tenuissimo, o cangiante fino al bianco latte. Si usava inoltre vestire di *viva pastorella* (verde mela) e di *capelli della regina* (color cannella chiara). [...] *Sospiro di Venere* significava rosa corallo unito al verde mare con orli di merletto, *un istante* era l’accordo del rosso granato col paglierino e *una persuasione* voleva dire bianco latte e celeste.²³⁰

Ultimately, the description of colors draws its imagery from the world of nature - plants, fruits, animals and flowers: ‘giallo limone’, ‘verde limone’,²³¹ ‘color banana’,²³² ‘al giallo sole si intercala il giallo cedro’, ‘color albicocca’, ‘rosa lampone’, ‘color prugna scurissimo’, ‘giallo Chartreuse’, ‘rosa ciclamino lilla fragola’, ‘rosso geranio’, ‘turchini genziana’, ‘morbido color pervinca’, ‘il viola è sempre floreale: dal glicine, all’orchidea, all’eliotropio’, ‘azzurro pavone’, ‘giallo pulcino’,²³³ ‘merletto color tè’,²³⁴ ‘color nebbia’,²³⁵ allowing for a rich collection of synesthetic perceptions of the emotions that objects and colour could give. The ‘rossi miscelati, rinnegati, concilianti’ or the ‘rosso leale, aperto, dichiarato: rosso vermiglio’²³⁶ show how Manzini, by connecting the chromatic scale with the outer world, can mix emotions with colours, allowing the reader to perceive the sensation that the colour conveys inside the article’s structure.

²²⁸ 3/34 F. M.

²²⁹ Manzini and Campanella, p. 344.

²³⁰ 3/109 F. M. [my emphasis].

²³¹ Manzini and Campanella, p. 186.

²³² 3/60 F. M.

²³³ Manzini and Campanella, p. 260.

²³⁴ 3/14 F. M.

²³⁵ 3/16 F. M.

²³⁶ 3/31 F. M.

4.2 The signified of Gianna Manzini's articles: the creation of an emotional world

The analysis of Manzini's style has shown a set of characteristics that make her prose, at the level of the signifier, emotional. However, the signifier always sustains a meaning, that is called 'the signified'. This section investigates the signified of Manzini's articles to establish which characteristics make their content emotional. What will be analysed is the kind of 'world' recreated in her fashion narrative. By using the term 'world' it is meant a set of themes, situations and characters - realistic and plausibly close to the everyday situations and experience of articles readers - created by the author in order to talk about fashion: to display a fashion item or collection, a new trend, a textile innovation, a behaviour or a custom typical of women and their practices of adornment. In this sense, the nature of the themes and settings, the feelings that Manzini attribute to the protagonists of her articles, the relationship between the female and the male world, and the way she categorises the psychological profiles of women according to the way they dress, they are all elements that can inform us about the way the implied author *Vanessa/Pamela* perceived the society to which she addressed. Furthermore, these elements show also the way Manzini employed and reworked, in her narrative, the credible presumed emotions and the personal experiences of the readership with the aim of appealing to them by creating an emotional engagement with the fashion object. In this perspective, this section shows how the world of fashion is created on the basis of the way Manzini perceived the aspirations of her 'implied' readers.

The analysis of how Manzini deals with fashion and how she imagines her readership cannot be exhaustive of the mechanism of production and consumption of fashion press in twentieth century Italy. However, by applying the semiological model of Barthes to Manzini's fashion articles it is possible to understand how fashion, by referencing everyday situations and people, can create a parallel reality that is similar to our everyday experience but is empowered, appealing and dreamlike. This tells us a bit more about how fashion was consumed, what themes, feelings and situations recurred most to entice the reader about specific fashion items.

By using Barthes' words, the world recreated in fashion articles, can be called the *World of Fashion*. However, while the world of Manzini's articles keeps a connection with reality, the fashion cosmos described by Barthes is completely a world apart, where anything stands anarchically before fashion and everything is tyrannically governed by its rules. In this universe that stands on its own, everything is perfect, funny and the female protagonists of

fashion spreads are always ‘on top’ and perfect. As Barthes says, every woman signified by the rhetoric of fashion is ‘imperatively feminine and absolutely young’ and her work ‘does not keep her from being present at every festive occasions throughout the year of the day; she leaves the city every weekend’ and she also likes ‘everything at once from Pascal to cool jazz.’²³⁷ According to Barthes, this woman sums up the dreams of the readers, also because in her life nothing is impossible or troublesome: she has no problems with money when shopping and she has never experienced boredom. In her world, fashion escapes time and ‘fashion time is essentially festive time.’²³⁸ This stereotyped depiction of femininity in fashion magazine has been widely analysed by Paul Jobling who tackles the problem of gender and sexuality in Barthes’ fashion system.²³⁹ According to Jobling, Barthes conveyed a rigid and reactionary vision of gender as a pre-given identity: as if being male or female depends on biological nature rather than features consolidated through the constant reiteration of certain speech and body acts as Judith Butler’s theory on gender and performativity demonstrates.²⁴⁰

Then, Jobling points out how Barthes does not acknowledge that while he was writing *The Fashion System*, male and female sexuality in media, started to be represented as more complex and fluid concepts, not tied anymore to rigid gender stereotypes.²⁴¹

The concept of gender in Manzini’s articles can be positioned as midway between Barthes and Jobling. As the analysis of her articles reveals, the *world of fashion* related to her writings is rather anchored to common everyday situations that seem more realistic and closer to possible experiences and feelings of readers. While the woman of Barthes’ *world of Fashion* has the most desirable body, the most wanted job, and is always on vacation, Manzini’s characters of fashion articles seems more ‘human’, realistic and less embedded in unattainable stereotypes.²⁴² This will be particularly evident in the kind of emotions that the author has to pinpoint to appeal the readers when she describes settings or employs specific themes, and in the type of emotions related to different kind of femininities.

On the other hand, Jobling’s criticism to Barthes found its parallels also in Manzini’s articles because in terms of femininity she doesn’t propound fixed models of women. Rather she exhorts different types of womanhood that are not fixed, calling for a constant performance of some acts that are related to ‘being feminine’.

²³⁷ F/S, pp. 260-1.

²³⁸ F/S, p. 250.

²³⁹ Jobling, *Fashion Spreads*, pp. 94-6.

²⁴⁰ Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

²⁴¹ Jobling, *Fashion Spreads*, p. 95.

²⁴² Such as ‘Monstrous woman’ in Barthes’ description. F/S, p. 260.

Given the multiplicity of elements that constitute the world of Manzini's articles, this section will be split into two parts. Since Manzini's articles have to do with female fashion, the protagonists depicted are always women. This is a significant element because it allows us to see how the author imagined her readership: she had in mind an ideal female reader and this section will show what characteristics Manzini imagines she should have. However, sometimes female customs in fashion articles are presented according to a biased male perspective: for this reason, we will see how this view can shape some female traits.

The second section looks at Manzini's *world of fashion* from a different perspective. It shows the typology of themes that she uses in her fashion journalism. History, art, and literature are all employed to empower the poetic aura of her prose, to inform and to give a cultural slant to her writing. The use of these themes will show the cultural heritage and the collective repertoire of images to which Manzini has to hint in order to entice the reader, confirming the degree of cultural interests of Manzini's implied readership.

4.2.1 Women and femininities in Manzini's world of fashion

This section looks at how woman is signified in the rhetoric of fashion. Femininity is an important pillar of Manzini's *world of fashion* since the author, through female characters, constantly tackles issues regarding women's relationship with practices of adornment. The examination of womanhood in Manzini's articles follows Barthes conception of sex and body as sites upon which fashion can construct its narrative. This creates models where womanhood is highly connoted. Below I will analyse how Manzini constructs the narrative around her female characters in fashion articles, showing the role that emotions play in this process.

What is at stake in this section is to see how Manzini's *world of fashion*, when it comes to female characters, uses emotions to build up connections with the reality and the lived experience of the implied readers, as they are configured by Manzini. This allows us to see how femininity is re-created in Manzini's *world of fashion* and how this shows practices of femininity that are far from being stereotyped but they suggest different 'shades' of womanhood.

Inside the framework of fashion articles, it will be shown, through a set of examples, how emotions affect femininity according to an 'osmotic process'. The models and practices of femininity in Manzini's world of fashion are produced and conveyed by drawing on people and customs deeply anchored to the social context in which Manzini lived in.

On the other hand, once they are inserted in the narrative of the article they can act as a didactic model that may exhort women to behave in a different way to enhance their lifestyle.

To better comprehend this mechanism of twofold influence, I'm going to discuss some examples. In her fashion articles, Manzini draws from the emotions that she attributes to her ideal readers when they deal with femininity and related issues. This creates emotional models with which the readers easily identify. The identification is enabled by the fact that models and the emotional experiences described are realistic and not unattainable. This provides a more empathetic connection between readership and the situations described.

The first example is the article 'Collezione primaveraile'.²⁴³ This piece is divided into three sections. In the first, Manzini recounts her attendance at the fashion show where the clothing that will be in vogue the next spring has been showcased. While the latter part of the article is a detailed technical description of the garments - their colours, shape and situations in which they could be worn - the section in the middle, entitled 'Come si guarda una collezione', describes two possible approaches to fashion performed by two female characters, each one with a different attitude towards looking at the collection that the journalist as *Pamela* is going to chronicle.

The first woman would like to choose and buy a dress from the collection displayed in the show. Here, *Pamela* gives immediately an insight into the feelings that pervade the character. Instead of being enthusiastic, the first protagonist is anxious about the purchase. As Manzini puts it, 'la signora che vuole soltanto scegliersi dei vestiti guarda con occhio preoccupato: la sua attenzione è vincolata in mille maniere': the woman feels upset and worried because she doesn't want to miss any item of the collection displayed. While the dresses come in succession, *Pamela* constructs the chaotic sequence of the protagonist's states of mind that is like the succession of dresses on the show: "'Presto!" sembra dire con gli occhi sull'abito che passa troppo rapidamente'. Soon, a feeling of deeper worry insinuates into her once she has tried to figure out what her family would say about the dress that she is going to choose: 'L'ha fatto già suo [il vestito] ma un minuto dopo si corruccia [...] l'ha sicuramente a torto sentito disapprovare [dalla famiglia]'. At this point the situation is getting worse once she realises that the dress might be expensive, and this makes her turbulent mood worse, so that, now, she is anxious and incapable of appreciating and enjoying the fashion 'spring collection'. This first character created by *Pamela* shows how an everyday situation and a realistic type of woman could be employed in the article fiction with whom the reader is expected to identify. This woman is clearly different from the perfect model of woman delineated by Barthes in *The Fashion System*. By listing a set of emotions like worry, fear

²⁴³ 3/111, F. M.

of not being appreciated by family and the anxiety that doesn't let her to live the moment, Manzini may have created a pattern of emotions with which the readers of her articles can identify. Clearly, this does not mean that they have necessarily experienced these sensations during a fashion show. But this kaleidoscope of emotions tells us about the way the author constructs the articles and the importance that the use of realistic emotions had in it. Furthermore, even if we cannot know if they were emotions or ways of behaving that really belong to the actual readers of Manzini, this can give us a picture of how she imagined her implied reader. This concept can be applied also to the outline of the second female character which is the opposite of the first one. This woman has a more relaxed attitude to looking at the models that she maybe will buy. Through a behaviour that contrasts with that of the previous woman, she is absolutely confident, and her *nonchalance* allows her to enjoy the beauty of the collection and also to make the right purchases: 'la signora che va a un'esposizione come a uno spettacolo, rimandando a un secondo tempo [...] il problema della scelta, si accorgerà [...] d'aver scelto senza accorgersene e in maniera sicura [...] godendo del piacere che danno le cose belle.'

However, this relationship between emotions and femininity in Manzini's fashion articles can also be defined as osmotic. In fact, the experiences and sensations felt by the characters can be seen as paradigmatic and act as an example for the readers of how to behave in specific situations. By presenting the second model in the example above, Manzini was offering a type – a woman with a more relaxed attitude in fashion consumption - from which the reader could probably learn. This assumption raises the complex problem of how the implied author *Pamela* would present herself to her implied reader. As a matter of fact, throughout the article, it is possible to identify rhetorical devices and contents that allow us to make some assumptions regarding how Manzini perceived her position towards her readers. It can be said that she addresses to her readers with a tone that is reassuring but instructive at the same time. She speaks as if she already experienced the situations and the state of mind described, and this helps in creating an engagement with the reader. Throughout a set of rhetorical devices that have been already discussed in the previous section, *Pamela* frequently uses the plural form in verbs and pronouns, putting herself at the same level with those who read her. At the same time, her tone is instructive: like an elder sister, she gave advices on how to behave, proposing, in the example above, an alternative model of behaviour. In doing so she is never ironic about these behaviours. Rather her attitude is benevolent, compassionate and she shows sympathy to the two female characters, saying that there is nothing wrong in being anxious but probably it will be better to leave any worries and enjoy the aesthetic pleasure afforded by the fashion show. This position of *Pamela* is worthy of attention because other popular fashion journalists of the period – like

Irene Brin – didn't construct an implied author that depicts the feelings and sympathises with the emotional world of their readers. Brin, in her writings, shows the presence of interjections, parentheses or rhetorical questions that are used to give the article an ironical slant. But differently from Manzini, her tone is never reassuring or instructive. To make an example, in an article of 1945, with a hint of irony, Brin is presenting a collection of jewellery. She emphasises the consolatory function that jewels had during wartime:

Chi avrebbe salvato i tailleurs, faticamente tratti dalle giubbe smesse del marito, se non si fosse potuto appuntare sulla rovescia un sole d'oro, giustamente immenso e ripreso dall'altro docile intorno al polso? Il mondo era grigio, il coprifuoco cominciava alle cinque, però dal lobo sinistro pendeva una lacrima verde, dal destro una lacrima rossa e non chiedete a noi il perché del capriccio. I nostri cappotti sapevano, tutti, di falso latte, di falsa lana, di falsa sicurezza, ma la borchia che li chiudeva intorno al colletto (non di pelliccia, nessuno disponeva di pelliccia) era almeno lustra e allegra.²⁴⁴

She remembers with a sarcastic and bitter tone the precarious situation of wartime, especially in terms of clothing, showing how jewels comforted women's vanity by compensating for the lack of beautiful garments. She even ironically stresses how women's desire for jewellery was fulfilled by stealing the golden buttons from the uniforms of their husbands. Also, Brin never created fictional characters in her articles by attributing to them common sensations in everyday situations as Manzini did. Instead, for example, in other articles, she refers to famous people of her time, mocking women who imitate the style of American actresses, such as Joan Crawford: 'Ci fu uno stile Crawford, [...] ci fu soprattutto una bocca Crawford, con il labbro superiore a salsicciotto di fegato, l'inferiore a fetta di cocomero, biasimata sulle prime, imitatissima in seguito.'²⁴⁵ In doing so, Brin's articles have a distancing attitude effect and she depicts with irony the world of fashion by openly criticising the customs and the dictates of fashion.

By further exploring the attitude that the author establishes towards her readers, in the publication 'Del cappello a campana'²⁴⁶ we can find an example of *Pamela's* empathetic disposition. The theme of the article is the depiction of how an item of fashion - in this case the cloche hat - can be functional to some states of mind that may have been experienced by Manzini's readers. The article opens with a 'eulogy' of the cloche hat: it is not in fashion anymore and *Pamela* is sorry about that. The nostalgia for this hat contrasts with the constant research and enthusiasm for the new that marks fashion. *Pamela* regrets the disappearance

²⁴⁴ Brin, Irene, 'Il nord e il sud', in *Bellezza*, November 1945.

²⁴⁵ Brin, Irene, *Usi e Costumi 1920-1940*, ed. by L. Tornabuoni (Palermo: Sellerio, 2001), p. 95.

²⁴⁶ 3/37 F. M.

of the cloche hat because its huge brim served the specific function to conceal the face of women after they have cried. For this reason, the hat is 'indulgente e obbediente' and embodying these human characteristics, it became a kind of friend in moments of sadness. 'Era un cappello indulgente: che protezione un po' d'ombra sul viso quando, dopo aver pianto dirottamente (non vi capita mai?) è necessario incipriarsi e uscire alla svelta'. *Pamela* assumes that all her readers have found themselves at some time with their faces disfigured by tears. Only the cloche hat allows women to go out without it being noticed that someone perceives that they have cried. The parenthetical element 'non vi capita mai?' shows the attempt by *Pamela* to play down the sadness and comfort those readers who may have found themselves in that specific situation. In this sense, the hat, that can be understood as a metonymy for fashion, shows in Manzini's view the reassuring and healing power that only the frivolous objects of fashion can give. Manzini then adds that the hats currently in vogue like the turban, the fur hat or the bonnet would produce the opposite effects because they are not so broad to conceal the face: 'provate in simile casi a mettervi in capo un turbante, un colbacco o una cuffia. Vi guardate allo specchio e, novantanove volte su cento ricominciate a piangere.' The author then continues, using the first-person plural, 'perchè dobbiamo convenirne' or 'noi stesse ci consoleremo', showing once more again the empathy and the attitude of a journalist who considers herself as part of the group of readers whom she is addressing.

There are also two other factors in Manzini's fashion writings, that contribute to shaping the protagonists in ways designed to appeal her implied reader. The first is the influence of the psychoanalytic theories that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century. The studies made by Freud had a huge repercussion on many fields of the human knowledge. During this period, fashion, understood as the practice of dressing and adorning oneself in the social context, started to be investigated from a psychoanalytical point of view. The studies of John Carl Flügel are the first application of psychoanalytic theory to clothing. *The Psychology of Clothes*, published in 1930, analyses the motivations that led people to dress in certain ways. The act of dressing-up is seen as a compromise between adornment and decency, and the outcome of the conflict aroused by the unconscious impulses. Along these lines, Manzini creates her characters in some fashion articles through the naively and playful application of psychoanalytic theories: she often shows how the way of dress can be indicative of personal psychological traits and also of some unconscious impulses. In particular, she employs Flügel's theory according to which practices of adornment serve to enhance sexual attractiveness and clothes are the equivalent of sex. This allows Manzini to make an examination of the sexual differences between men and women showing how these practices

of adornment can have effects on both the female and male psychology.²⁴⁷ In fashion articles Manzini observes the different styles adopted by women, and also their diverse conceptions about fashion. As it will be shown below, this allows her to create different psychological profiles - each one linked to a specific belief and way of conceiving of fashion - with which her readers may identify. This can be indicative of how Manzini identified models of being woman in her contemporary age, but also how this perception, transfigured in the light of psychoanalytic theories 'naively' adopted and reworked, creates models of behaviour able to shape and influence readers consumption of fashion. In addition, as will be shown below, Manzini considers these traits as if they were scrutinised from a male perspective, opening the issue of how Manzini tackled the relationship between men and women in her writings.

This tendency to create a set of categories that define certain types of women is a characteristic that has been already explored by scholarship in fashion writings. As Paul Jobling argues in his analysis of fashion press and especially in that of the narrative of the magazine *Amoreuse*, fashion articles can be often organised as a play of acts, each one mobilising a certain female stereotype that is complemented by an opposite *mis-en-scene* and text. Jobling reports the example of an article where a set of female types are linked to a certain behavioural traits: we can find 'she who surprises does so by dressing "à l'avant-garde"' or 'she who bewitches' is a red-headed vamp who is a 'public danger' a 'psychologist', 'dramatic' and a 'little perverse'.²⁴⁸

Something similar can be found in Manzini's article entitled 'L'estate dei vestiti a cerchio',²⁴⁹ clarifying how she creates psychological profiles. By conducting a little survey of what elegance is, Manzini outlines five different psychological types. Following the already examined anaphoric structure, she starts each paragraph of the article with the definition of how an elegant woman is supposed to be. 'L'eleganza è ardimento, spirito, innovazione' says the first woman who participates in this survey. She doesn't accept passively the clothes created by the dressmaker, but she actively modifies them: 'la sarta mi fornisce il bell'abito, [...] ma deve essere evidente che sono io a scegliere, ad accentuare o ad attenuare la fisionomia d'un abbigliamento.' This claim is followed by *Pamela's* remark, who praises the good approach to fashion of this woman, including her in the behavioural trait of the 'confident woman' that is 'aggressiva e aggraziata all stesso tempo' with an independence that 'riposa sulla sicurezza di essere appoggiata dal proprio tipo'. The second woman says that elegance is harmony and that clothing must have a certain equilibrium in all its components: 'Il "completo" [...] in quanto accordo è matematica; è una forma di

²⁴⁷ Flügel J.C. *Psicologia dell'Abbigliamento*, ed. by G. Tibaldi (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2012).

²⁴⁸ Jobling, *Fashion Spreads*, pp. 94-8.

²⁴⁹ 3/19 F. M.

disciplina.’ This statement leads *Pamela* to conceive this woman as someone who is excessively fussy, narrow-minded and less carefree.

In portraying another character, *Pamela* says that she is not very beautiful, and she comments her vision of elegance saying ‘tanta saggezza in tema di abbigliamento mi ispira diffidenza. Mentalità da suocera o da istituttrice; da agra sacrificata. Parla bene, non c’è che dire, ma che sia elegante non direi. Inoltre, una grande eleganza a queste condizioni, velatissima, può essere assoluta ma perfida. Pensateci un po’’. *Pamela* is rather skeptical toward women who profess decency because, under their modesty, they may hide a certain maliciousness. In addition, it must be noted how *Pamela* invites her readers to meditate on this psychological type, as if she would warn the female readership that these characters may be encountered in everyday situations. At the end of the article and by outlining the last woman, *Pamela* makes an important consideration. According to this female type, elegance must rely on politeness: ‘L’eleganza è educazione e civiltà. Certi eccessi della moda offendono; [...] L’amore del nuovo per il nuovo sopraffà il gusto e contrasta con le leggi fondamentali dell’estetica.’ *Pamela* finds herself in accordance with this definition, to the point of saying that this woman is *signorilissima*. At the same time, *Pamela* disagrees with the woman’s attempt to emulate male attitudes toward fashion. According to the author, she seems ‘una di quelle donne delle quali gli uomini hanno fatto una studiata copia di loro stessi, imprestandole qualcosa come le calze di seta: un po’ di morbidezza e di grazia’: by stressing the importance of sobriety, this woman has given up the most important traits of femininity: the ‘elegance’ with a certain degree of confidence, grace and boldness. By giving up all these female traits she has been turned into a copy of a man. At this stage, *Pamela* concludes: ‘Strano: è proprio a certe donne, che pure rappresentano per gli uomini una così profonda vittoria, che essi, quasi subito, voltano le spalle annoiati.’ In this sense, this last female profile is defined according to a male perspective, showing what men would appreciate or not in women. This leads to the introduction of another feature that, along with the psychoanalytic theories, contributes to shaping the general profile of the implied readers of Manzini.

In fact, the relationship between men and women is an important topic in Manzini’s articles, but it is tackled in different ways in her journalistic production. As shown in Chapter Two above, Manzini took part in the debate regarding women’s emancipation in Italian society. Her commitment is further enhanced by the fact that she signed these articles with her real name, rather than using one of her two pseudonyms. In this production she shows her pride for women’s achievements, but she also warns them to preserve the ‘typical female qualities’ of ‘grace’ and ‘elegance’.

However, even if these qualities are exalted also in her fashion production, in these publications her commitment to female emancipation is more nuanced. This is clear when she describes and evaluates women's behaviour from a male perspective and not from an objective point of view. I'm going to provide two examples of these contrasting attitudes (the first related to articles signed by Manzini and the second related to fashion publications signed by *Pamela/Vanessa*).

In the article signed by Manzini 'Immagini di donne',²⁵⁰ she tells the brief anecdote of a nun who drives a car. This action, set in a context where women were not used to driving, caused dismay in men who are seeing this woman - moreover a nun, in their words - who does an act so revolutionary for the women of that period.²⁵¹ As Manzini says: 'E fu chiaro che l'automobile ha dato il colpo di grazia a tutta la serie di quei tipi femminili che, soltanto con l'essere adorabili, determinarono l'avvento della squisita tirannia muliebre', sanctioning an important step toward the affirmation of the equality of both sexes. This passage shows how the vision of the nun has found men unprepared: 'Oh ecco la grande novità: lo sguardo: non più vagabondo e provocante ma come dotato d'una facoltà nuova, rapido, aritmetico, conclusivo [...] Immagine in mille modi dunque, strappata, alterata, divisa; eppure la realizzi forse meglio di quella della donna a lungo fissata a un tavolino di caffè.' In this extract we can see how Manzini proclaims that something is changed in women and that men must accept this, despite their irony and skeptical attitude.

However, in the articles that deal with fashion and that are signed with *Vanessa* or *Pamela*, Manzini changes slightly the way to deal with the relationship between men and women. In 'Che cosa pensano gli uomini'²⁵² Manzini shows the psychological investigation of certain female behaviour in fashion, looking at them through a biased male perspective. *Pamela* tries to adopt men's point of view in considering why women are so subject to the changing nature of fashion trends. According to men, women, by dressing, show a regression to a 'narcissistic state.' *Pamela* merely reports this strong statement and she does not show any position regarding to this disrespectful claim.

The article continues saying that women's ability to both cover and uncover themselves would conceal an 'intrinsic psychic conflict': 'In questo sentimento ambivalente, dice il filosofo Nicola Perrotti, coprire-scoprire, nascondere-esaltare, mi sembra consistere l'essenza della moda femminile, ambivalenza che [...] nasconde un conflitto psichico insito nella donna.'²⁵³ Following Flügel's theories, women's behaviour in fashion is

²⁵⁰ 1/127 F. M.

²⁵¹ The press clipping has no date. However, the 'contemporary' topic, which is similar to other articles like 'Scacciata dal paradiso', allows us to date the articles in the 1960s.

²⁵² 3/22 F. M.

²⁵³ 3/22 F. M.

psychoanalysed as if their attitude to changing their clothes would be something wrong. The male philosopher Nicola Perrotti tends to find negative reasons at the basis of this female behaviour, as if it can be something that can be done only by women. *Pamela*, in the middle of the article, asks her readers if they have been hurt by these words. She recognises how these claims could hint at their sensibility but at the same time she asks if women may like the ‘violation’ of their intimacy. This statement strongly contrasts with the journalistic production which tackles contemporary issues and that sympathises with women’s emancipation from men. A similar thing happens in one article that deals with women who want to choose a tie for their men. The author says ‘è con questo amabile laccio al collo che esse pretendono inconsciamente di modificare qualcosa nel carattere o nelle maniere del proprio uomo; forse d’attenuare l’eterno conflitto del quale, del resto, hanno bisogno.’²⁵⁴ This is an overtly biased perspective, that *Vanessa* reports without showing her position. What emerges is an unbalanced psychoanalysis of women’s behaviour conducted through a male perspective which holds stereotyped conceptions about women. These are unfairly depicted as always in search for change. Furthermore, they are also portrayed as the ‘passive’ victims of fashion, but paradoxically, as the ‘active’ manipulators of men’s behaviours only because they want to choose a tie for their partner.

4.2.2 Themes in Manzini’s world of fashion

This section looks at the ‘image-repertoire’ that Manzini employed for the connotation of her fashion prose and that constitutes her *world of fashion*. It will be argued how these images, drawn from diverse cultural themes, will inform us on the way fashion was consumed and experienced in magazines by Manzini’s readers.

History, literature, art, are the most employed themes used to build up the narrative of Manzini’s articles. Below we will provide an example for each category, understanding how they enhance the emotional narrative around a fashion object or practices of embellishment. We are going to start from the historical theme which holds a prominent role inside Manzini’s journalistic production. By ‘historical’ it is meant the reference to different epochs of the past. Manzini’s employment of the historical theme takes two forms: we can find articles whose development takes place entirely in a far and away epoch and others where shorter historical digressions introduce or clarify contemporary fashion customs. Let’s focus on the first type.

²⁵⁴ Manzini and Campanella, p. 250.

At first glance, articles which are entirely set in the past seem completely ‘detached’ from the contemporary reality of Manzini. However, it will be noted that there are some historical references that establish a connection between what happened in the past and some fascist initiatives. In fact, the high concentration of the historical theme can be registered in the articles written between 1938-1942.

The discourse on fashion, although it can be considered a contemporary subject because the journalist is called to show the latest trends in terms of women’s clothing, is transfigured and displaced into a different era which is so distant from the historical time in which Manzini lived in. An example can be one article published in 1940 ‘I segni di speranza’. The topic here is the new trend of ribbons. Manzini doesn’t contextualise their use in her contemporary fashion scene, but she talks about their use in the Arcadia: ‘Di nastri, la vezzosissima Arcadia è quasi più colma che di fiori. Le Filli, le Clori e le Amarilli [...] ornano la manierata e ingannevole semplicità con i nastri più svariati e più ricchi.’ In this way, the fashion element in journalism is transfigured by the historical theme and placed in a different temporal and spatial dimension.

The use of history as a tool of displacement of the fashion element from one epoch to another can be explained as a way to draw fashion away from the turbulent events of fascism and the Second World War. In this perspective, Manzini’s articles can perform an ‘escapist’ function from the contemporary reality marked by the exacerbation of fascism and also by war restrictions which included also shortages of clothing. The ‘evasive’ role of fashion articles set in the past finds also its resonance and justification in the nature of some cultural and literary movements which arose in the twentieth century, as well as showing a parallelism with the escapist purposes of *prosa d’arte*. Symbolism, along with the hermetic movement, that also influenced the literary activity of Manzini, tended to see poetry, literature and art as the places for the expression of the self and a refuge from the political events. This tendency can be also confirmed by the general attitude that Manzini has in her overall fashion production. In fact, she usually tends to avoid any explicit reference to contemporary events. Only few exceptions show the mention of some initiatives undertaken by the ‘Ente Nazionale della Moda’ or, as shown in chapter one above, the advertising of the new autarchic fibres.

However, as underlined at the beginning of this section, the historical theme in Manzini can be a double-edged sword. While fashion discourse is sometimes literally moved and suspended in another temporal setting, it is possible to find, in the same typology of articles, some implicit connections between what Manzini tells about the past and what was going on in her time. In fact, there are articles, mostly those set in 1200s, 1300s and 1400s, that deal with the issuing of sumptuary laws aimed at curbing female expenditure for luxury

goods and also at hindering the influences of foreign fashions. In these articles, female vanity is targeted as the ruin of family assets and female desire of adornment is presented as a source of corruption for the ‘pristine’ beauty of women. Although these ideas are attributed to people from the past – sometimes famous historical/literary persons like Lucrezia Borgia or the wife of Bellincione Berti – they contrast with the general aim of fashion journalism which is to promote – and not discourage – the consumption of items and practices of embellishment. The presence of these elements can be explained as a symmetry between what happened in the narrative of Manzini’s historical articles and some similar measures undertaken by fascism. In the article ‘Cappelli e acconciature’ published in 1939²⁵⁵ Manzini shows the latest models of hats. She compares each model with those in vogue during the Florentine 1400s, showing their names during that age ‘Cappucci, vespai, cerchi, velette, asciugatoi’. Manzini starts to talk about the hat ‘modello a sella’ and she says how this was forbidden during the 1400s in Florence because of some ‘provvedimenti fiorentini che accennarono a un influsso straniero nella moda [...] la legge del 1456 dice infatti: “le donne non portino cappelletti, né corna né selle alla fiamminga o alla francese [...]”.’ This action bears an interesting similarity with the measures that fascism undertook for the implementation of the Italian fashion industry. Through a set of actions, and also with the institution of important bodies, fascism contrasted the influences of international fashions to foster the Italian manufacturing and style.

In parallel, in articles that disapprove the vanity of women in the past and their desire for embellishment it is possible to find some similarities with the fascist campaign against the cosmopolitan ‘donna crisi’ and in favour of a more frugal model of exemplary mother and wife. An example in this sense can be the article ‘Curiosità’²⁵⁶ where Manzini tells how ‘a Roma, nel 1520 e nel 1521 furono promulgate leggi minuziosamente severe contro il lusso delle donne’. In the same way, in the article ‘Difficile vita del cosmetico’²⁵⁷ Manzini reports Leon Battista Alberti’s dialogue *Sulla Famiglia* where the character admonishes his wife against the use of ‘liscio’- which is the make-up: ‘Adunque, volendo esser lodata di tua onestà, tu [...] arai in odio tutte quelle leggerezze, con le quali alcune pazze femine studiano piacere agli uomini credendosi così lisciate, impiistrate e dipinte.’ In this sense these articles, so suspended in a ‘different’ historical reality, can also bear some similarities with fascist laws and initiatives that fascism took in terms of its process of nationalisation. This supports the point, already argued by Sivieri, that Manzini cannot be seen as a writer completely detached from her contemporary reality.

²⁵⁵ 3/56 F. M.

²⁵⁶ 3/18 F. M.

²⁵⁷ 3/20 F. M.

The historical theme can be further explored as the site for the emotional connotation of characters, allowing Manzini to empower, through the use of themes, the emotional characteristic of her prose. In this sense ‘La moglie di Bellincione Berti’ focuses on the effects that the luxury restrictions and the request of sobriety in women may have produced in them. Published in 1941, this article, by showing Bellincione’s wife feelings, can create an emotional bond with Manzini’s readers. It presents the portrait of the wife of Bellincione, the head of one of the most important families of Florence in twelfth century. Contrary to the customs of many women of the period, Bellincione's wife - in the articles there is no mention of her name - is the example of how a good woman should be according to that age: she has never put on make-up, worn expensive clothes, or behaved in an extravagant way. In describing her behaviour, *Pamela* says that she was boring because ‘mai un complimento che l’abbia messa in imbarazzo o che abbia richiamato sulle sue guance un’onda di rossore, [...] senza contare poi la forza d’animo che le ci volle ad affrontare lo sdegno, la collera, la beffa, il disprezzo delle maligne contemporanee. E quella forza d’animo la indurì negli anni.’ The self-restraint of Bellincione’s wife prevents her from experiencing any type of emotion that *Pamela* identifies as the mark of femininity. As already seen in the example of the five psychological profiles, any attempt to conceal emotions and to be moderate risks putting the woman’s behaviour closer to that of men with the result of not being accepted by the male counterpart. In fact, Bellincione, the husband, was proud of the wife’s conduct but he was also unsatisfied, feeling the desire to be entertained by the ladies that, differently from his wife, were more frivolous and careful about their personal embellishment. By using the historical filter, Manzini handles emotions - the feelings of dissatisfactions and sadness of Bellincione’s wife - to signify the importance of feminine practices of adornment in defining and constantly performing femininity. In fact, Manzini continues to say that, in putting on make-up, Bellincione’s wife discovers her femininity: ‘un giorno la moglie di Bellincione, vicina ai quaranta, [...] trovò in un cassetto un rosa di cencio [...] quasi per gioco, si strofinò le labbra e, appena, le guance. Non aveva neppure finito di guardarsi che cominciò a piangere [...], e pianse tanto da non aver poi bisogno di lavarsi il viso. [...]’: by finding herself beautiful, she discovers how the adornment can contribute to her happiness, wellbeing and better perception of herself. The sob, that comes once she sees her new appearance, is cleansing in every sense: she finds another aspect of herself and at the same time it washes the make-up off her face. Only in the second place the transformation is noticed by the husband and *Pamela* concludes: ‘quel pianto la sciolse un po’ se al suo sposo potè scappargli detto per la prima volta dopo tanti anni “come sei bella oggi.”’

Through the psychological portrait and by the description of the emotions of Bellincione’s wife regarding her femininity, Manzini modernises an historical personage and puts her

closer to the possible lived experience of her readers. This creates an emotional linkage, showing us how the union of history and emotion could be appealing for Manzini's readership allowing to identify and vividly perceive the emotions described.

Looking at other themes in Manzini's fashion articles, we can find literature and art often weaved together with the historical theme. These are employed when Manzini needs to showcase the distinctive traits of one collection, or one specific object of fashion. The use of these themes serves different purposes.

The first one is that of supporting the description of the visual element. By using comparison with art and literature, Manzini allows the reader to understand better the description that she made of fashion objects. An example is in the article 'L'antica parigina.'²⁵⁸ Here the simile with elements drawn from art clarifies the description. The movement of the gown is illustrated in this way: 'In questo abito, la trovata, [...] consiste nell'imporre a un tessuto [...] un andamento quasi solenne, disciplinatissimo per cui la gonna può dar l'idea d'una coppa veneziana di cristallo capovolta. Spiccato da un quadro del Cremona sembra questo, in moerro solferino.' The dress' skirt, in its appearance, suggests the crystal goblet's shape. What is interesting is that Manzini doesn't limit herself in resembling the gown to a cup. She further connotes the description by adding a more clarifying cultural references saying that the skirt is comparable to a Venetian crystal goblet and also comparing the dress' fabric to that used in the paintings of Tranquillo Cremona.

The second purpose of cultural themes is to instruct and inform the reader. Through cultural digressions, sometimes allowed by the insertion of parentheses, she inserts additional material that provides technical information about what she is talking about. In the following example, we can find the tendency of Manzini to deepen the knowledge about a specific item by making these ample excursuses. In 'Ancora rimpianti',²⁵⁹ *Pamela* illustrates the new collection of buttons that will come back in fashion despite the innovation brought by the zip fastening. She says that in ancient France the zip was named the 'adultery closure' and it revolutionised clothing by replacing buttons that took longer to be closed. After expressing how the replacement of buttons causes a kind of nostalgia to her because of 'la cura, la diligenza, l'impegno, che l'indossare un abito [con i bottoni] implicava', she sets the tone to make a didactic digression on the history of buttons that were created in the tenth century: 'I bottoni ebbero da prima funzione ornamentale. Comparvero verso il decimo secolo e furono ispirati alle gemme, ai bocciuoli. Diventando più attillate le fogge, si cangiarono verso il XV secolo in un pratico mezzo per allacciare e se ne videro di cuoio, legno, rame,

²⁵⁸ 3/34 F. M.

²⁵⁹ 3/37 F. M.

ferro e stoffa. E vi furono per le classi patrizie bottoni d'oro, d'argento e di pietre preziose.' Then Manzini brings the discourse to the present and she introduces the new collections of buttons explaining how they could reproduce 'scene pastorali simili a quelle delle porcellane settecentesche.'

The cultivated and educational tone is also sustained by the bibliographical and archival references that Manzini inserted in her articles to show that the information that she is giving can be proven. This shows how Manzini conceived seriously her instructive task. In the article 'Calze Storiche'²⁶⁰ making the historical excursus on the most famous stockings that have been produced and worn during history, Manzini says that those belonging to Cleopatra were worth three ecu. Between parentheses, Manzini cites the source of information: '(Roma, Archivio di Stato, Vol. 33 Fol. 56).'

Also, the insertion of literary quotations or sometimes passages of poetries illustrate Manzini's need of integration of the cultural element in fashion, as way to amplify the mood or the sensation provoked by a certain object of fashion. In the article 'Eloquenza del ventaglio'²⁶¹ she celebrates the importance of fan in women's lives and she supports this argument by quoting Honoré de Balzac: 'Ma Balzac lo loda [...] per il suo soffio e per il refrigerio che gliene deriva: "Ho un ventaglio nella mia camera che provocherebbe naufragi in mare" (Libro II, lettera IV).'

In conclusion, this section has shown the themes and images that constitute the process of connotation and signification in Manzini's fashion articles. The historical theme was widely employed especially during 1938-1942 and less in her later production. 'Images' drawn from past have shown how problematic the evaluation of her fashion discourse can be in relation to current events. However, history contributes to enhancing the informative role of her articles and also the conveyance of emotions in relation to fashion and practices of embellishment. Art and literature bring the reader into a cultural sphere which is made more evocative by the comparisons and parallelisms which set the atmosphere for the description of dresses. This enhances the visualisation of fashion objects and also foster a more enticing and persuasive writing.

The use of all these themes reveal to us the way Manzini engaged with her readers. She imagined a reader who is cultivated able to follow her complex syntax, her many pauses and a stratified syntax. To appeal the reader, Manzini builds up a cultivated world of fashion

²⁶⁰ 3/27 F. M.

²⁶¹ 3/98 F. M.

which reveals an intellectual as well as emotional way of both production and consumption of fashion articles.

Conclusions

This study has investigated the role of emotions in Manzini's fashion journalism. The aim was to show how the written language of fashion, differently from real clothing, is the site for both the production and consumption of emotional content, by the author and the readership respectively. Drawing on Barthes' seminal works in fashion language, I conducted a semiological analysis of Manzini's fashion articles to understand how emotions can be conveyed both at the level of the signifier and the signified. The examination of the rhetorical devices employed by Manzini has revealed how her literary style holds a strong influence over her fashion prose. The use of rhetorical figures contributes to the creation of a fashion prose that, like her novels, is evocative and connotative. The style of Manzini's articles exploits these technical devices to convey a set of emotions that are evoked by objects, situation or pertain to the characters of her fashion narrative. The strong connection between her style as novelist and that of fashion journalist is also confirmed by the structure of the articles that are conceived as short narratives. Like the protagonists of her literature, the characters of her fashion articles are described throughout their psychology and sensations. Fashion here is not understood as something useless and frivolous. Rather, it is a serious thing that can reveal something about characters' personality. In this sense, it becomes the litmus test of the behaviour and of the process of self-knowledge of the characters. The most interesting thing, which has been revealed during the analysis of the signified, is that Manzini's articles have been conceived having an ideal reader in mind. In this way, the readership, presumably female, may have easily identified with the situations, the feeling and even with the psychological profiles delineated by Manzini in the articles. The implied author *Pamela* or *Vanessa* draws from everyday situations to construct the characters of her articles. As shown, this is not a predictable process: Barthes argued how fashion magazines propose unattainable and unreal models of experiencing and being in fashion. The fashion woman of Manzini's articles, on the other hand, is more human, like the protagonists of her novels.

The study has also shown how the relationship between the implied author and reader in Manzini's articles enacts an osmotic process: Manzini draws from a pattern of emotions and situation that may be close to the experience of her ideal readers, but these emotions can actively instruct the readers about practices of embellishment. The instructive and empathic tone, the cultivated digressions, the instruction on how to behave and dress in certain situations, are all elements that trace the author's attempt to enhance the female experience of fashion and social situations.

Finally, it can be argued that emotions have a great importance in the economy of Manzini's fashion articles. They do not serve as the mere mean to 'sell' the fashion item. Rather, contextualised within the Manzini's prose as a whole, they act as a powerful device to uncover and reflect the desires and expectations of her female readership. Emotions serve to instruct readers toward a better approach to femininity: in this emotional experience, according to Manzini, lies the secret of being woman.

This research presents a set of limitations that I expect to deepen further during my upcoming Ph.D. I deem the comparative analysis with other fashion journalists of the period useful to strengthen my argument. The analysis of possible similarities or differences between modes of writing about fashion can tell us about a different way of conveying emotions in the same cultural and historical context. Then, I aim to broaden further the critical approach to fashion writings by implementing my knowledge on the mechanism of production and reception, especially in terms of the concepts of the implied author and implied reader. In parallel, I aim to expand the analysis of Italian publishing industry in twentieth century, studying the editorial context in which the journalists chosen for the analysis wrote.

Appendix

4. Rhetorical system	Sr Phraseology of the magazine		Sd Representation of the world
3. Connotation of Fashion	Sr Note	Sd Fashion	
2. Written vestimentary code	Sr Sentence	Sd Proposition	
1. Real vestimentary code	Sr Clothing	Sd Fashion	

Figure 1. The Fashion System structure. See Barthes, 1983, p.37

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- 3/71 Le indossatrici -24th August 1940
- 3/72 Un cappellino compromettente, -30th March 1940
- 3/73 Il vetro filato e i merletti – 13rd April 1940
- 3/74 Per viaggiare – 3rd May 1941
- 3/75 Il trucco e il ritratto -1st February 1941
- 3/77 Fiori artificiali
- 3/81 Rose e fil di ferro-11st October 1941
- 3/79 Bottega dell'imbalsamatore
- 3/80 Fuga di modelli
- 3/84 Tema di Guerra – 28th October
- 3/86 La moglie di Bellincione Berti
- 3/88 A proposito di volubilità -14th October 1939
- 3/90 Pellicce 6th January 1940
- 3/91 La moda italiana -1936 Vanessa
- 3/93 Ben tornata folaga – 23rd December 1940
- 3/94 Boa, pelli e pellicce, 1935, Vanessa
- 3/95 Cani di moda - 27th December 1941
- 3/96 Le borsette – 8th March 1941

- 3/97 Del ventaglio – 27th April 1940
- 3/98L'eloquenza del ventaglio - 10 January 1942, Pamela later Vanessa
- 3/99 Un nuovo ornamento: la frutta – 8th July 1939
- 3/100 Ultime notizie e ultimi colori -13rd July 1940
- 3/102 Conversazione
- 3/104 Le disavventure di Berenice – 20th December 1941
- 3/103 Ben tornato nastro di seta, 31st August 1940
- 3/103 Chi fa da sè fa per tre, 3rd November 1940
- 3/106 Umori e malumori, 26th October 1940
- 3/107 Il costume di Bressoney, 4th September 1940
- 3/109 Il linguaggio della moda – 4th May 1940
- 3/110 Roma-Berlino, 4th January 1941
- 3/111 Collezione primaverile – 6th April 1940
- 3/112 Previsioni o indiscrezioni, 30st September 1939
- 3/314 Misfatti e prodigi della vanità, 19th September 1941
- 3/115 Novità e sorprese, 10th June 1939
- 2/368 Furoreggia a Parigi un sarto spagnolo signed Vanessa
- 3/60 Lo specchio delle donne - Colloqui con la modista, Vanessa 18th March 1939

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1/127 Immagini di donne, (no date), signed by Manzini

Fascicolo 1/A Cart 4 - Carte 1-14

1/44 manuscript (no date)

Articles in Archivio del 900'

[The archival documentation consulted is divided in Faldone 1, Faldone 12 and Faldone 13. Faldone 1 contains 6 folders of manuscripts and typewritten short stories of Manzini. Faldone 12 and 13 show a mix of short stories and press clippings of Manzini, *Vanessa* and *Pamela*]

Manzini, Gianna (Vanessa), 'Possibilità liriche dei vestiti', in *Panorama*, (no date) pp.537-9 Faldone 12, folder named 'Panorama'

